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Nick Carter Stories

THE DEATH CHAMBER
OR NICK CARTER'S
OUNCE OF PREVENTION

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THE DEATH CHAMBER;

Or, NICK CARTER'S OUNCE OF PREVENTION.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A SUGGESTIVE LETTER.

"It's not mine, Chick."

"Not yours?"

"No. The name appears to be N. Cotter, instead of Carter, though the writing is so bad one can hardly read it."

"Any street and number?"

"Neither. Merely New York City. The letter evidently was intended for the general delivery."

"The carrier must have blundered. You are so well known, Nick, that he probably took it for granted that the letter was meant for you."

"Quite likely."

"What's in it? Is it of any importance? Who is the writer?"

The speakers were Nick Carter and his right-hand assistant, Chick Carter. They had entered the library of the detective's Madison Avenue residence about eight o'clock one evening, and Nick had found among others the letter then under discussion, all of them having been brought by a carrier late that afternoon.

The envelope was addressed with a lead pencil, in a coarse, angular hand. At first glance Nick did not detect that the name on the cover was not his own, nor did he discover his mistake until he broke the seal and began to read the letter. It was written on a single sheet of plain paper, in the same coarse, illegible hand, and Nick had read only a few words when, looking up, he mentioned his mistake to Chick and the foregoing colloquy followed.

Reverting to the letter, after a second examination of the cover, Nick replied:

"There is no signature, nor any address. It begins: 'Dear Old Top.'"

"Humph!" Chick ejaculated, laughing. "That certainly is not very definite. It smacks of a college chum, a fellow club member, or some gay old rounder. I guess it's not of serious importance."

"I'm not so sure of it," said Nick.

Chick approached the roll-top desk at which the famous detective was seated. Nick had bent forward in the glare of his shaded electric light and was submitting the letter to a more searching scrutiny. He could decipher it only gradually and he read it aloud, as follows:

"DEAR OLD TOP: The layout is perfect. It ought to turn the trick. No stiff ever looked more natural, and the garnishings are sure to prove effective. I can see her finish. Take it from me, old chap, something is bound to drop, and drop hard, in that second-floor flat. But you keep away. Don't show your nose around there till you get word of the croak. You'll get it soon after midnight."

Such was the somewhat startling communication that Nick Carter opened by mistake that evening and read aloud to his assistant.

"By Jove!" Chick exclaimed, after listening. "It may, indeed, be more serious than I imagined."

"I thought, after reading the first few lines, that you might change your mind," said Nick.

"What do you make of it?"

"Deviltry of some kind."

"It strikes me so," Chick agreed.

"Reference is made to a layout that is expected to turn some kind of a trick," said Nick, glancing again at the letter.

"I see."

"Obviously, in the next line the writer refers to a corpse, calling it a stiff, which plainly denotes the irreverent and

low character of the writer. I don't get what is meant by the garnishings, however, which, it says, are sure to prove effective."

"Effective in causing the death of some woman, or girl, I should say," Chick reasoned, also gazing down at the letter. "The feminine pronoun is used, you see, in referring to her finish. It looks to me as if she is expected to die, or be killed, and the person addressed is directed to remain away until he is informed of her death."

"Yes, yes, all that appears to be reasonably plain," said Nick. "But I cannot fathom what is meant by the garnishings."

"It is, indeed, deucedly mysterious."

"There is a crime contemplated, nevertheless, as sure as you're a foot high," Nick added decidedly.

"The murder of some woman."

"Well, I think so. So blind a communication might, however, have other interpretations. Whether the deed has been done, or is yet to be committed, is an open question."

"I don't think it has been committed," said Chick.

"Why?"

"Because the letter ends with saying that the recipient is to get word of the death soon after midnight," Chick pointed out. "The letter was mailed late this afternoon. The midnight mentioned probably means twelve o'clock tonight. It seems safe to assume that the death would be promptly reported, and as word is not to be received until after midnight, it's odds that the deed has not yet been committed. It's only a little after eight."

"That's logical enough," Nick admitted. "But you overlook a possibility that the body might not be discovered for several hours after the crime. Midnight may be only the time, approximately, when the discovery will be made. See the point?"

"Yes, certainly," Chick nodded. "You may be right."

"Either interpretation may, as far as that goes, be correct."

"By Jove! it seems to me as if we should take some action in the matter."

"I agree with you."

"But what the dickens can we do?" Chick questioned. "Our hands are tied, so to speak. There is no way of telling where the second-floor flat mentioned is located. There are half a million second-floor flats in New York City. We cannot make a flying visit to all of them."

"Hardly," Nick said dryly.

"We might as well not have received the letter, then, as far as any aid we can render, or any step we can take to prevent the crime, assuming that our misgivings are warranted," Chick went on a bit disgustedly. "We can do absolutely nothing, in fact, but remain here like bumps on a log and let the trick be turned. If there were any way to——"

"Stop a moment," Nick interrupted.

"Well?"

"There has been an erasure on this paper."

"An erasure?" Chick again bowed nearer.

"Yes. See for yourself," said Nick, holding the sheet so that the light struck it at an angle and revealed the rubbed surface of the paper.

"By Jove! you're right, Nick."

"It is directly after the reference to the second-floor flat. It comes so near it that—ah! I have it."

"Have what?"

"The occasion for the erasure," said Nick. "The writer added the street and number, then evidently thought it unnecessary, or indiscreet, perhaps, to include the address. It was erased with a rubber, therefore, and the space it occupied now is covered with the next sentence. It's barely possible, however, that I may be able—wait a bit, I'll try my lens."

Nick had been holding the sheet at various angles in the bright light, trying vainly to read the lines that had been erased, indications of which could be very faintly seen. Taking a large reading glass from his desk drawer, he studied them through it and almost immediately with the result for which he was hoping.

"Ah, this is better," he said. "I think it will turn the trick."

"Can you decipher anything?"

"Yes. Here is the first syllable of Lexington, and a little farther on is a capital A."

"Lexington Avenue!" Chick exclaimed. "That reduces the field."

"Materially," said Nick, while he continued his searching scrutiny. "I think also that—yes, I'm sure of it."

"The number?"

"Yes."

"Eureka!"

"You try," Nick suggested. "See what you make of it. If the same as I—well, I shall think we are correct."

Chick took the lens and for several minutes studied the almost indiscernible erasure. Presently looking up, however, he abruptly mentioned the very number Nick had in mind.

"Good enough!" Nick exclaimed approvingly. "I think we have located the flat referred to, and that we had better pay it a visit."

"By all means, Nick, as quickly as possible," Chick agreed, rising.

"We will leave at once."

"Do you want this letter?"

"Yes. It may come in handy, if we are called upon to explain our intrusive visit. Slip a gun into your pocket," Nick added, while both were hurriedly making ready to depart. "That also may come in handy."

CHAPTER II.

THE DEATH CHAMBER.

It was precisely nine o'clock when the two detectives arrived in front of the Lexington Avenue house bearing the number discovered in the letter. The house was above Fifty-first Street, one of a brick block of three stories, with a flat occupying each floor.

None of the apartments was lighted, as well as could be detected by an external view from the opposite side of the avenue, though a dim light was burning in the vestibule leading to the lower hall and stairways.

There are no curtains at the upper windows," Nick remarked, after a brief scrutiny. "The top flat evidently is unoccupied."

"There are tenants in the other two," Chick answered, while both lingered on the curbing. "We might raise some one on the first floor and learn who lives in the second flat."

"Come over," said Nick. "We'll see what we can learn."

He led the way across the street, while speaking, and mounted the steps to the front door. It was found to

be ajar, though an inner one leading into the hall was locked. Nick stepped into the vestibule, on the side wall of which were three push buttons and speaking tubes, with a space below each for the names of the tenants. Only that of the first flat was marked, however, having a card bearing the name C. F. Paige.

"Nothing shows who occupies the second floor," Nick observed. "I'll see what the bells will bring forth."

He rang that of the first flat, but received no answer. The other two proved equally unproductive, and Nick then decided that he would enter the house.

"We'll take a chance," he remarked, producing a pick-lock with which to open the door. "If there is nothing doing and no one discovers us, we can leave without disturbing anything, and no one will be the wiser. If caught in the house—well, we'll cross that bridge when we reach it."

"Go ahead!" Chick nodded. "I'm with you."

Nick quietly unlocked the inner door and they entered the lower hall. Without pausing, he led the way up the hardwood stairs to the door of the second flat. There he briefly listened with his ear at the keyhole.

Not a sound came from within.

A silence like that of a tomb pervaded the entire house.

"We'll enter," Nick muttered. "Lend me your flash light."

Chick complied, and Nick threw a ring of light on the keyhole. He deftly picked the lock, then quietly opened the door and shot the beam of light in the entry of the second-floor flat.

"Come," he whispered. "We'll find out what that letter signifies."

The entry led into a prettily furnished parlor. The room was in darkness. The windows were closed. The curtains were drawn. The air was dry and stuffy, as if the room had been closed for several hours. An open door on the right led into a dining room. Directly across it and close to the floor could be seen a narrow thread of light. It glistened on the polished threshold of a closed door.

"There's a light in that next room," Nick murmured, touching Chick's arm. "It probably is a bedroom. I'll try the keyhole."

He crept nearer, crouching, and noiselessly moved aside the dustplate. He peered through the keyhole, but could see only the light shed through the meshes of a portière that hung across the door. He listened, but could hear nothing—not even the low, regular breathing of a solitary slumberer whom the room might contain. Nick had, however, no idea of turning back, and he arose and quietly turned the knob, then opened the door and drew aside the portière.

The scene within was a tragic one. The room, a prettily furnished bedroom, was brightly lighted. A street dress and some discarded undergarments were lying on a chair, with a pair of shoes and hosiery near by on the floor. Obliquely across the bed, the covering of which had not been turned down, lay the figure of a young woman clad only in a nightdress. One bare foot was touching the floor. Her arms were extended and her head rested on one of the pillows, over which flowed great waves of loose, raven-black hair.

Her face was upturned in the full glare of light—at first sight a strikingly pretty face, though then of ghastly and deathlike composure. Her nightdress was red with blood, and upright, nearly above her heart, was the gem-studded handle of a stiletto, the entire blade of which appeared to be buried in her breast.

Was it murder—or suicide?

One viewing the shocking picture would, at first sight, have involuntarily asked himself that question, and Chick Carter, even though accustomed to tragic scenes, recoiled a little, and gasped impulsively:

"We are too late, Nick. The deed is done."

Nick Carter, however, was quick to detect the truth, and to recall the first words of the letter which had brought him there.

"Not yet, Chick," he said confidently, while he strode into the room. "We are only up against the layout mentioned in that letter."

"Layout?"

"This is not a corpse. It's a wax figure."

"Wax? Great guns!"

"Even this dagger is not—ah! see for yourself."

Nick had seized the supposed weapon as if to draw it from a wound.

There was no wound, however. There was, in fact, no weapon. The stiletto handle was a handle only. It had no blade.

Chick Carter gazed at it for a moment, then at the wax lay figure placed with lifelike—or, to be more correct, wonderfully deathlike—appearance on the bed. His face wore an expression of almost ludicrous perplexity.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he exclaimed. "I have been up against curious propositions, Nick, and a good many of them, but this one certainly wins the laurel wreath. It beats me to a standstill. It is like a scene from the chamber of horrors."

"I agree with you," said Nick.

"What's the meaning of it? What earthly motive can any person have had in faking such a shocking scene?"

"Shocking—that's the very word."

"The very word?"

"It is, unless I am much mistaken, the key to the mystery. This scene was designed to shock somebody, Chick, causing sudden terrible fright, probably with a hope that the shock would prove disastrous—or, to be exact, fatal."

"Fatal?"

"Certainly," answered Nick. "Remember what is said in the letter. This is the layout referred to; this corpse-like figure of a girl who, apparently, has either been murdered or committed suicide after making preparation to retire to bed. These are the garnishings—the supposed weapon protruding from her breast, her gory nightdress, her discarded garments, her shoes and stockings lying on the floor. Suppose that an acquaintance, a friend, a roommate, or a sister, even, were to have entered alone, and unexpectedly viewed this scene. Wouldn't she have been shocked—frightfully shocked!"

"Frightfully shocked is right," Chick agreed emphatically. "Such a shock very often kills."

"That's the very point."

"The result aimed at?"

"Exactly," said Nick. "Recall the other predictions in that letter. Somebody is going to drop, and drop hard, in that second-floor flat. That's what is predicted."

"I see the point," said Chick. "It refers most likely to a friend of this—well, not of this figure, but of some girl resembling it."

"Undoubtedly."

"Who is expected here before midnight."

"Certainly. The letter implies that."

"But isn't it a long chance?" Chick questioned. "Suppose the shock failed to kill?"

"The rascals who faked this scene, Chick have reason to believe that the shock will surely kill," Nick replied. "That appears in the closing part of the letter, the death being confidently predicted, and some one warned not to come here until informed of the fatality."

"By Jove! I guess you're right."

"I would stake my reputation on it," said Nick. "Furthermore, take it from me, the rascals who prepared this scene not only have murderous designs upon some one, presumably the young woman residing here, but they also are an exceedingly crafty gang. They have aimed to kill their victim with this scurvy trick, knowing that her death, after the removal of all this paraphernalia, would surely be attributed to natural causes. I think we may learn that the intended victim has heart trouble, and that the gang knows it."

"That's why they framed up this scene, then."

"Certainly. But what lies back of it?" Nick quickly added, while his grave face hardened perceptibly. "What's the cause for such a dastardly attempt at murder? Who is the intended victim? Who are the persons out to take her life? What is the stake for which they are playing? Isn't it long odds, Chick, having failed in this attempt, that they will try again?"

"Yes, surely."

"It's up to us, then, to prevent it."

"We can warn the girl."

"That might not be sufficient. Some desperate means may next be used, if the incentive to the crime is strong enough," Nick forcibly argued. "Knaves out for murder are not easily frightened from their hunt."

"That's true."

"A mere warning, then, may not be effective," Nick went on. "Besides, I think we should make it a point to get the scamps capable of such deviltry. If not already criminals, they are willing enough to become such. They will, unless prevented, turn the trick sooner or later. We must get them, therefore. An ounce of prevention, Chick, is better than a pound of cure."

"Right you are," Chick readily allowed. "What do you propose doing?"

"We'll inspect things a little more carefully, for a starter, and then find out who lives here," said Nick. "That will not take long. Then we will await the arrival of—the intended victim."

CHAPTER III.

THE INTENDED VICTIM.

Nick Carter was a keen analyst. Such circumstances as those depicted appealed to him far more forcibly and with more direful suggestions than to most men. Nick knew that a dastardly murder had been attempted, devised in more than cowardly fashion, and he also knew that the attempt was likely to be repeated.

The investigations that immediately followed were of brief duration. Every detail of the tragic scene was found to have been artfully faked. The lay figure was a cheap construction, and could be easily and quickly destroyed. Only the nightdress was soiled with blood, which then was entirely dry. All the tragic features of the scene could be removed in a very few moments, in fact, leaving not a trace of the shocking picture.

All this further convinced Nick that his deductions were entirely correct.

Articles in the wardrobe closet, the bureau drawers, and in a trunk in one corner, showed that the flat was occupied by two young women, but there was nothing suggesting their identity or vocation.

It was about ten o'clock when Nick ended his investigations in the house, and remarked to Chick:

"We'll go out, now, and leave things just as we found them. Inquiries at the next house will probably enable us to learn who lives here."

"And then?" questioned Chick.

"We'll wait outside until the girl arrives. She probably will come alone. The rascals who did the job must have foreseen that, or taken steps to make sure of it. The expected shock might be averted if she had a companion."

"That's true. It may be, then, that the one who resides here with her had a hand in the job. Otherwise, why is she absent at just this time?"

"That's a pertinent question, Chick, but we'll defer further speculation until we get a few positive facts," said Nick. "Then, perhaps, we may size up the case with some approach to accuracy."

He led the way out while speaking, noting that the lower flat still was in darkness, then directed Chick to wait while he questioned one of the neighbors, from whom he soon obtained the information he expected.

Nick learned, in brief, that the flat in question had been occupied for about a month by two girls, both about twenty-two years of age. Both were professional chorus singers, and were then employed in one of the leading theaters. Nick was also told that their names were Helena Beverly and Lucy Lazzero. The former had been seen to leave the house alone about seven o'clock that evening.

Nick got a description of both, then rejoined Chick on the opposite side of the avenue.

"Miss Beverly is the one for whom the trap has been laid," said he, after stating what he had learned.

"How do you determine which?"

"I have a description of both," Nick explained. "It is safe to assume that the lay figure bears some resemblance to the roommate of the intended victim. Otherwise the trick might fall flat."

"True."

"The figure is of quite good size, with very black hair, which corresponds with my description of Lucy Lazzero. The name indicates that she is an Italian. Miss Beverly is rather a slender, delicate girl, on the other hand, with brown hair and eyes. She is the one, all right."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Chick. "I see the point. But aren't we taking a chance, Nick, that our own designs will be discovered? A spy may be watching the flat. We may have been seen entering the house."

"I do not think so," Nick quickly reasoned. "The performance at the Hippodrome, where Miss Beverly is employed, doesn't end until half past ten. She cannot put on her street attire and reach home much before midnight. The rascals can have no reason to fear their knavery is suspected, nor any occasion to watch the house all of this evening. One of them is likely to show up, however, soon after Miss Beverly returns, or a little earlier, perhaps."

"In that case, we ought to head off anything indicating

that we already have discovered the trick, and have designs upon the scamps."

"I intend doing so," said Nick, glancing at his watch. "It now is ten o'clock. We'll go over to the Hippodrome. I know the watchman at the stage door, and will contrive to have a talk with the girl. I can accomplish it without giving rise to any misgivings, even if the scamps are also employed in the theater."

"That's a very proper scheme," Chick said approvingly. "You can give the girl a hint at what we have discovered, also such instructions as the case requires."

"That is precisely what I intend doing. Come on!"

They arrived at the theater soon after the performance ended, and with the help of the watchman, who was an old acquaintance, Nick easily accomplished his object. He found Miss Beverly to be a remarkably pretty girl of twenty-two, with a very winsome and intellectual face. It denoted a refined and lofty character, though her color indicated that she was not in the best of health.

Naturally, of course, Miss Beverly was both awed and alarmed by what Nick told her. His assurances quickly composed her, however, and she readily consented to be governed by his advice. He told her only what was immediately necessary, leaving until later a thorough inquiry into the extraordinary case.

At half past eleven, acting upon Nick's instructions, Lena Beverly, as she was called, went home alone and entered the house. She did not go to her bedroom, however. She switched on the light in the parlor, waited for a few moments, then rushed out of the flat and down to the street, screaming for help—precisely as if she had viewed the shocking scene prepared for her.

Two men were approaching down the avenue at that moment. They ran to her assistance and hurried into the house with her—precisely as if it was their first visit. They were, of course, Nick Carter and Chick.

Nick immediately took the reins.

"Set the hall door ajar, Chick," he directed. "Wait near it and tell me at once if any one comes up the stairs."

"Trust me," Chick nodded. "I'll have an ear in both directions."

Nick turned to the waiting girl. Lena was removing her hat and jacket, in the meantime gazing with awed, brown eyes toward that shocking semblance of a death chamber which the detective had described. With her slender, dainty figure and strikingly pretty face, she was the type of girl to whom most persons feel irresistibly drawn, and Nick Carter was quick to respond to such sentiments, and to lend himself to aid and shield her.

"Now, Miss Beverly, sit down and listen to me," he said kindly. "I am going to tell you precisely what has occurred, and we then will see what we can make of it."

"I am utterly nonplused, Mr. Carter, to tell the truth," Lena replied. "Knowing you by name and reputation, however, and having absolute confidence in you, I not only shall be governed by your advice, but also feel very, very grateful for your interest in me. I don't know how I can ever repay you."

"That is of no consequence whatever," Nick assured her, smiling. "You are in a position, Miss Beverly, unless I am much mistaken, in which it devolves upon me as an officer to look into the matter, and, if necessary, protect you."

"That is very, very good of you, Mr. Carter."

"If any one should come while we are talking," Nick continued, "you must pretend that we are strangers, that you entered your flat and saw the scene in the bedroom, that you were terribly frightened and ran out crying for help, and that we merely came to your assistance. I do not want my identity suspected, nor even that we are detectives. I want it supposed that we are strangers, only, with no personal interest in the matter."

"I understand you perfectly, Mr. Carter, and will be governed accordingly," Miss Beverly earnestly answered.

Nick then reviewed the matter in detail, telling her what he had done and much that he suspected, and he then showed her the letter which he had opened by mistake that evening.

"Examine the writing, Miss Beverly," he directed. "Do you know the hand?"

"No, Mr. Carter, I do not," said Lena, complying.

"It is not that of Miss Lazzero?"

"No, sir, nothing like it. She writes a very small hand."

"Do you know any person named N. Cotter?"

"I do not."

"And you have no idea, I suppose, for whom the letter was intended?"

"No, sir, not the slightest."

"Come and look at the figure on the bed," said Nick. "I wish to know whether it resembles Miss Lazzero. Do not feel alarmed."

"Oh, I'm not afraid, Mr. Carter, now that you have prepared me for the scene," said Lena, rising. "I'm not a coward, sir, by any means. I have always had to fight for my rights."

Nick led the way into the bedroom, where the girl gazed frowningly at the shocking scene. She shook her head after a moment, and said:

"No, it does not resemble Miss Lazzero. If I had entered alone, however, not expecting anything of the kind, I might have thought it was she. I should have been frightfully shocked, of course, and the effect perhaps would——"

"Would what?" Nick inquired, when she hesitated.

"Would have been what my physician predicted."

"What was that? Explain."

"Why, sir, I was ill about three months ago, and had trouble with my heart," said Miss Beverly. "My physician warned me to avoid violent exercise for a time, and told me that any sudden, severe shock might prove fatal."

"Oh, that's precisely what I have suspected."

"But that was weeks ago, Mr. Carter. I now am entirely recovered."

"The scamps guilty of this frame-up may not be aware of that," Nick replied. "Who knew of your affliction?"

"Why, many of my friends, of course."

"That's somewhat unfortunate," Nick remarked. "It makes a large circle of suspects. Whose garments are those on the chair?"

"They belong to my friend, Miss Lazzero."

"How long have you known her?"

"About two months, since we began singing in the Hippodrome."

"Where is she to-night?"

"She did not sing this afternoon or this evening. She was invited to meet some friends, and the stage manager gave her the day."

"Were you here early this evening?"

"No, sir. I have not been here since noon. I took supper with two other chorus girls."

Nick did not tell her what the neighbor had said. He knew she could not be the girl seen to leave the house early that evening. He believed all that she was telling him. After pausing for a moment, he took the figure from the bed and put it in the closet and closed the door.

"Now, Miss Beverly, we'll return to the parlor," Nick said. "You must be perfectly frank with me, and do what I direct. My judgment in such a case is much better than yours. Somebody has put up this job with a view to cause your death, and the attempt may be repeated. I am going to take steps to prevent it, and to discover the guilty parties. Your permanent safety may depend upon that."

"I understand you," said Lena, resuming her seat in the parlor.

"Now, tell me," said Nick, "is there any one you suspect?"

"No, sir."

"Who would benefit by your death?"

"I know of no one, Mr. Carter."

"Have you any property?"

"I have not. I have only what I earn each week."

"Are you in love, or loved by any man to whom another girl aspires? Jealousy may have been the motive."

"I do not think so," said Lena, blushing. "I admit that I am fond of one of the orchestra musicians, a Mr. Dorrington, and I think he loves me. But I know of no rival, Mr. Carter."

"There must be, nevertheless, a very strong motive for this job," Nick insisted. "I must discover it, in order to discover its perpetrators. If not love, jealousy, avarice, or—well, it's hard to hit upon a motive at random. Tell me something about yourself, Miss Beverly, your past life and family. Have you had troubles of any kind?"

Miss Beverly shrugged her shoulders expressively, while the tinge of red in her cheeks faded to a dead white, showing that a question from the detective had finally struck home.

"Tell me frankly, and without any reservations," Nick added, quick to detect the change.

CHAPTER IV.

A MOVE FOR SAFETY.

Nick Carter knew, as only one of his remarkable discernment and acumen could have known, that he was on the track of knavery in which a human life was at stake. No less a conviction would have held him to the course he was shaping.

Chick Carter still stood listening at the open door. Not a sound came from without, nor from the flat below.

Ten minutes had passed since they entered the house.

Miss Beverly drew herself up and replied to Nick's question.

"Troubles—yes!" she exclaimed ruefully. "I have had troubles to burn. My history, Mr. Carter, is not an interesting one. My father was an officer on a steamer running from New York to the Mediterranean ports. My mother was an Italian, whom he married in Rome. She died soon after I was born, and my father was lost at sea three years later. I was all they left. Naturally, of course, I became a burden on some one."

Miss Beverly sighed, as if these personal disclosures were painful, though she drew herself up quickly, and added:

"That some one proved to be my uncle, Caleb Maddock, with whom I since have lived. But I have repaid all he ever did for me."

"What do you mean?" Nick inquired.

"I was little more than a servant in the house from the time I could wash a dish and wring a mop. I was given a decent education, however, though I picked up for myself all that I know of music and art. My uncle was willing enough that I should go on the stage. I promised to give him half of my income for the first five years."

"I take it, then, that he is a very exacting and mercenary man," said Nick, intently regarding her.

"Yes, both," Lena said shortly. "He always wants all that is coming to him. I ought not to blame him, I suppose. He has an invalid wife and one son, Jack Maddock, who never has cut much ice in the way of business, and who never will in this world.

"He is your cousin?"

"Yes. He has been in Mexico and Central America about two years, looking into some of my uncle's mining ventures. He has done nothing, I guess, but spend more money than one could cram into a peck measure. He returned home two months ago, and since has capped all his follies by falling desperately in love with me. That's what he says, at least, and I suppose I can take his word for it. He wants me to marry him at once. What's even worse, my uncle insists that I shall do so."

"Insists?" questioned Nick, with eyes lighting a little.

"That doesn't half express it," Miss Beverly declared. "Uncle Caleb is a bear when he cuts loose, and as hard as nails when opposed. He fell into a rage that terrified me. He called me a pauper, an ingrate, a selfish jade, and swore he would break every bone in my body unless I married Jack within a week. I really thought he meant it, Mr. Carter, for his violence was like that of a madman. I fled from the house and came to town. I've been afraid to go back there."

"Back where, Miss Beverly?" asked Nick. "Where does Caleb Maddock live?"

"He owns a place near New Rochelle. I used to go out each night after the theater closed, but since my falling out with him I have lived here with Miss Lazzero. The furnished flat was to rent and we took it until the end of the season. That will be on Saturday. There are only three more performances."

Nick drew up in his chair. He felt that he was picking up a thread worth following.

"You said, I think," he replied, "that Jack Maddock has been in Mexico and Central America for two years."

"Yes."

"But he displayed no love for you before leaving home?"

"No, indeed. He was always a disagreeable, arrogant fellow. He's a chip of the old block."

"His love appears to have flamed up very suddenly, then, since his return?"

"Decidedly so. I was thunderstruck when he mentioned it. The whole business has placed me in a very distressing position. I don't dare to go back there. I know Uncle Caleb to be capable of terrible violence. He injured his wife in a moment of passion years ago, resulting in her being an invalid ever since. On the level, Mr. Carter, he's a holy terror. I have always been afraid of him."

"Have you any other relatives?"

"No, sir. I had only a grandmother on my mother's side, who lived in Rome. I lived with her for two years

before my father brought me to America. She then was an old lady, and she must have been dead for many years. I have only my Uncle Caleb and his family."

"Is he in business?"

"He is a lawyer, with an office in New Rochelle, but he has very little practice. I hardly know what I shall do after the season closes."

"You must do what I suggest," Nick said earnestly. "I wish to investigate this case. It is more serious than you suppose. No person would have attempted to kill you without some very strong motive, and it may be of great advantage to you if I can discover the truth."

"I will do whatever you direct, Mr. Carter. I am very grateful for your interest in me."

"Now, about Lucy Lazzero," said Nick. "Are you sure she is a true friend?"

"I never have doubted it."

"Was it at her suggestion, or yours, that this flat was rented?"

"Hers. Soon after I fled from home she suggested that we take a furnished flat together. I liked the idea, and we took this one."

"Has she ever been absent before for the day?"

"No, sir, not since we have lived here."

"Do you expect her this evening?"

"Yes. She said she would return about midnight. I seldom reach home earlier than that."

Nick glanced at his watch. It was a quarter to twelve. Rising abruptly, he joined Chick at the door, saying quietly:

"I suspect the Lazzero girl. We must find out with whom she has spent the day. Go out and watch for her. Shadow her escort, if she has one. If not, I shall remove Miss Beverly, and the Lazzero girl may return to her friends, rather than remain alone here. Follow her, Chick, in that case."

"I understand. If she takes a cab——"

"You'd better prepare for that."

"Leave her to me," Chick nodded, hastily departing.

Miss Beverly looked surprised, but there was no sign of apprehension or misgivings in her pretty face. Plainly enough, she had absolute confidence in the detective.

"I don't quite trust Miss Lazzero," said Nick. "If she enters while we are talking, however, you must not betray any personal suspicions. Leave her to me, Miss Beverly, and act upon any cue I may give you."

"I will do so, Mr. Carter."

"I shall send you to a lodging house a little later, and will give you a line to the landlady, who sometimes serves me in various ways. You will like her, and may freely confide in her. You may send for your trunk to-morrow, but do not come yourself, nor venture alone to any place where you might be in personal danger. Take a carriage to and from the theater in the evening, and guard yourself very carefully while I am looking into the case."

"Do you really feel, Mr. Carter, that I am in such serious danger?"

"Frankly, I do," Nick admitted. "Do not be alarmed, however. No harm shall befall you if you follow my instructions."

"I will surely do so," Lena earnestly declared.

"Very good. Now, do you know any of the persons whom Lucy Lazzero is visiting to-day?"

"I know only two by name, but am not acquainted with either of them. One is a man, of whom Lucy is very fond, and the other a girl who sometimes calls at the theater to see her."

"What are their names?"

"The young man is Giuseppe Cardenio. The girl's name is Theresa Gargoni."

Nick Carter evinced no surprise, nor even that he knew the couple mentioned, as well as that they were crooks of the worst kind.

It was only a few months since they had, with the help of Theresa Gargoni's parents, conspired with one Gordon Lang to rob and incriminate his own business partner. All of them had been run down and arrested by Nick and his assistants. Owing to the business relations of the two men chiefly involved, however, and to certain legal features of the case, as well as through the efforts of a very clever lawyer, all of the scamps had succeeded in escaping with fines for assault and conspiracy, the robbery charge falling flat, on grounds that Lang had taken only property belonging to the firm.

Nick knew that he had immediately left the country, a dishonored and ruined man, but he did not know what since had become of the Gargoni family. The mere mention of Theresa Gargoni's relations with Lucy Lazzero, however, convinced him that his misgivings concerning Miss Beverly were very well founded, and that she was menaced by crooks capable of any degree of knavery.

Nick decided not to further alarm the girl, however, but immediately inquired:

"Do you know where Theresa Gargoni lives?"

"I do not, Mr. Carter."

"Or Cardenio?"

"No, sir."

"I shall look them up. The flat over this is not occupied?"

"No, sir. It has been vacant for more than a month."

"Who lives on the first floor?"

"A Mr. Paige and his wife, with two children. He is in the insurance business. They are nice people. They are away for a few days."

Nick smiled a bit grimly.

"The time for this knavish job was very nicely chosen," he remarked. "It must have been selected by some one in a position to foresee——"

Nick broke off abruptly.

The street door had closed noisily. Some one was entering—possibly, since there is virtue in coincidences, the very one of whom the detective was speaking. Hurried steps were sounding on the hall stairs.

"That's Lucy—that's Miss Lazzero," cried Lena, in a whisper.

"Leave her to me." Nick glanced sharply at her. "Don't butt in needlessly. Take whatever cue I give you."

Miss Beverly nodded.

The door of the flat was unceremoniously opened. A girl in flashy street attire hurriedly entered. She was somewhat larger than Miss Beverly, but with a graceful, quick-moving figure, an attractive face, with clean-cut, dark features and black eyes, as restless as quicksilver, and flashing a shifty light that at once betrayed her volatile character.

She stopped short, with swift glances at her two observers, then cried, with an effusiveness which Nick immediately saw was partly affected:

"Oh, excuse me! I didn't mean to butt in, Lena. I

didn't know you were entertaining a friend this evening, or I would not have——"

"I am not exactly a friend of Miss Beverly," Nick interposed, checking her with a gesture. "I merely came in to assist her. She is much upset by something she discovered in her bedroom, when she——"

"Goodness!" Lucy Lazzero cried, throwing up her hands. "Not a burglar, I hope! Not a man!"

"No, nothing of the kind," said Nick, intently watching her.

"I'll see for myself."

"Wait a moment!" Nick checked her again. "I have removed it. I will tell you, instead, what she found."

He did so briefly, and, though Miss Lazzero became more grave, or pretended to be so affected, he detected in her eyes a covert gleam that gave her gravity the lie.

"In some respects, Miss Lazzero," he said, in conclusion, "the wax figure looks a little like you. I wish to find out who put it there. What do you know about it?"

"What do I know about it?" echoed the girl, with a quick display of resentment. "What do you think I know about it?"

"I asked to find out."

"Well, you'll find out, then, that I know nothing about it," snapped Lucy. "How dare you ask me such a question? You are insolent. I can't possibly know anything about it, for I've not been here since ten o'clock this morning. Lena knows that and——"

"Well, you needn't go up in the air," Nick interrupted. "You certainly put on the coat as if it fitted you."

"Well, it doesn't fit me!"

"Very well, then, if it doesn't. A mere question ought not to anger you. Who are the friends with whom you have spent the day?"

"It's none of your business who they are," Miss Lazzero cried, with eyes snapping. "I'll not be questioned by you in this way. You have no right. If I were a man I'd answer you with a blow. I'll not stay here; I'm going out again. When your friend, your very officious and insolent friend, has gone, I'll return and join you. I'll not remain here and be insulted."

"Nor will you find Miss Beverly here when you return," said Nick. "She has decided to go to a lodging house."

"Oh, has she?" cried Lucy shrilly.

"Yes."

"Is that upon your advice?"

"It is," said Nick. "She will leave in a very few minutes."

"Is that true, Lucy?"

"Yes. I have decided to take the advice of——"

"Oh, very well!" Miss Lazzero whirled round, with a scornful shrug. "You can do as you like, of course, but you'll find I'm not going to stay alone here. Our friendship is off, then. Don't ever speak to me again. As for you, Mr. Whatever-your-name-is, you're an insolent fool! I'll go back to my friends."

That was precisely what Nick wanted her to do, and he made no move to detain her. She flounced out of the flat with what certainly appeared to be scornful fury, and the bang of the front door quickly announced her departure.

Miss Beverly, looking still more grave and troubled, said nervously:

"I really am not sure you are right, Mr. Carter. If she——"

"Well, I am very sure of it, Miss Beverly," Nick kindly interrupted. "That girl is not to be trusted. She has the eyes of a snake. She is crafty, treacherous, and deceitful."

"It seems hard to believe," said Lena.

"You'll believe it later, take my word for that," Nick replied.

"I am doing so."

"I feel equally sure you will never regret it. Now, Miss Beverly, get what things you wish to take with you, and I will go with you to the lodging house mentioned, and make you acquainted with Mrs. Wort, the landlady. On the way I will give you still further instructions. You must be strictly governed by them, moreover, or I shall drop the matter entirely."

"Oh, Mr. Carter, don't do that," pleaded Lena, looking indescribably alarmed. "I will do whatever you direct."

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTERGAME.

It was nearly midnight when Chick Carter, following Nick's instructions, left the Lexington Avenue flat to discover, if possible, with whom Lucy Lazzero had been spending the day.

He knew she might be returning at that moment, and, therefore, he proceeded with some caution. He peered out from the vestibule, saw that no one was approaching from either direction, and he then left the house and walked briskly up the avenue to the first corner. He did not see, nor could he have seen, in fact, a couple then concealed in the dark vestibule of an opposite house, both of whom stealthily watched him come out and walk away. They were the very two about whom Nick Carter then was questioning Lena Beverly—Cardenio and the girl who entered the flat a few moments later.

"There! what did I tell you?" she muttered, gripping her companion's arm and flashing a swift glance at the lighted front windows of the opposite flat. "I knew she wasn't alone there. This job has been queered in some way. She did not return alone. It must be that that fool lover of hers, Dorrington, came with her. She——"

"Perdition! Dorrington be hanged!"

Cardenio's interruption came in suppressed, threatening whispers. He had caught sight of Chick's face, as the latter glanced back for an instant while moving away.

"What do you say?" questioned Lucy, under her breath.

"That's not Dorrington."

"Do you know him?"

"Know him—I should say so!"

"Who?"

"That's Chick Carter, the detective, the fly gun who helped queer our game with Lang four months ago."

"The devil you say!"

"Devil is right!" Cardenio darkly muttered, then hurriedly added: "Get a move on! We must sneak away before he turns back."

"But——"

"But nothing! Do you want to be caught here? Slip around the corner with me before he returns. I'll tell you what must be done. Hang him! we owe him something, Gargoni and I. Here's where we'll put it across him. Now he's turning back—I knew it."

The lithe, sinister-eyed rascal had, while speaking, hurried his companion out of the doorway and around a near

corner south, the opposite direction from which Chick had taken. Then peering around the corner, he saw the detective turn to retrace his steps, bent upon concealing himself to await the coming of Lucy Lazzero.

"Is he heading this way?" she questioned.

"Yes." Cardenio turned quickly and faced her. "Listen."

"Well?

"He wasn't alone with the girl," Cardenio went on confidently. "It's dollars to dried apples that Nick Carter himself is with her. They've got wise to something. Chick Carter is out after you."

"After me?"

"Sure! There's nothing to it. Those infernal sleuths never miss a thread worth picking up. They've learned enough to start them after you! That's why he's out here. *Carambo!* we must turn the tables on him."

"Can it be done?"

"Easy. It must be done, too, or the job will be off for keeps. This slip-up will only queer it for a time—providing we can get him and find out just what they've learned."

"That's right, too." The girl's frowning eyes lighted. "I see what you mean, now."

"Go in, then, as we have planned, the same as if you knew nothing about the job," Cardenio hurriedly directed. "Find out just what has come off and what is suspected. If you are called down, put up a kick and refuse to stay there to-night. Then come out and hike straight back to Gargoni's house."

"But suppose I am arrested?" questioned Lucy.

"You won't be. They have got nothing on us yet."

"But Chick Carter may follow me."

"Sure he will! That's just what I want him to do. He'll shadow you—and I'll shadow him."

"Oh, ho, I see, now!"

"I'll get him, too," Cardenio fiercely muttered. "Look out, mind you, that you don't show your hand. Return to Gargoni's and enter the house as if you hadn't thought of being followed. I'll lie low and watch Chick Carter. If he follows you—well, hang him, I can see his finish. Are you on?"

"Sure! It's plain as daylight."

"And game?"

"That's a fat question. Who wouldn't be game, you fool, with half a million at stake."

"Go to it, then, and don't lose your head," Cardenio whispered. "I'll duck under cover."

He turned away with the last and quickly vanished into the gloom of a near basement doorway.

Lucy Lazzero walked briskly around the corner, so briskly that one observing her would not have supposed that she had just left a companion. Without a glance to right or left, moreover, she tripped up the steps and entered the house from which the detective had emerged scarce three minutes before, so hurriedly had been the movements and discussion of the designing couple.

Chick Carter saw her from a concealment across the avenue. He inferred that she had returned without an escort, that her stay in the house would be brief, and that he should find it child's play to carry out Nick's instructions.

"Let him alone to make good," he said to himself. "He'll find some way to set her going again, unless he learns something from her about that faked death chamber, convincing him that he's on the wrong track. In that case, of course, he'll signal me to rejoin him."

Receiving no signal, Chick waited in hiding until Lucy Lazzero came bolting out of the house, displaying such haste and excitement that he was immediately sure that Nick had accomplished his object. He then had no reason to suspect, however, that the girl also was playing a game, one made feasible by his own designs, and one well calculated to pervert them and turn them to his own disadvantage.

Lucy Lazzero did not lose her head. She hastened straight away from the corner sheltering Cardenio. She walked rapidly up to Fifty-seventh Street, where she took a northbound elevated train and rode nearly to Harlem.

It was an hour when trains were well filled with homeward-bound theater patrons, which made it easy for Chick to shadow the girl—and equally easy for Cardenio to avoid detection.

After leaving the train, however, there was a temporary separation. Lucy Lazzero headed for the water front. Cardenio vanished into the first side street, through which he ran as if fiends were after him.

Chick Carter followed the girl at a discreet distance, wondering what associates she could have in the locality into which she was leading him. For their course took them into one of the very disreputable quarters lying along that section of the East River, where inferior saloons, cheap restaurants, and low dancing halls abounded. Most of them then were closed for the night.

Presently, rounding a corner, the girl picked her way into a narrow court, which the light from the street penetrated only feebly, and through which the damp, salty air from the river was blowing in fitful gusts. She brought up at a door of an inferior wooden house, into which she was admitted after knocking and waiting briefly, though none of the front rooms were lighted.

Chick Carter had not lost sight of her until that moment. Then, cautiously following, he found that an alley between the house and an old building near by led to a rear area close upon the river and a narrow dock, where two small boats and an old naphtha launch were made fast to a float secured to the stone wall washed by the restless tide.

These observations were made after Chick had picked his way to the rear of the house, of course, and he then discovered the lighted windows of a basement room, though the soiled yellow curtains were closely drawn, preventing any view within.

"By Jove, this is quite a drop from a flat in Lexington Avenue," he said to himself, while he sized up the house and surroundings. "She picks her friends in low quarters. This looks like the hang-out of a gang of river rats. Nick certainly has measured the girl correctly. I'll see what I can overhear."

Stealing by a back door of the house, Chick approached the nearer of the two windows, where he vainly tried to peer between the curtain and the casing. He could hear the voice of a woman within, however, and, crouching on the ground, he turned one ear to the window.

But there were sounds without that conspired against him—gusts of wind from over the black river, the swash of choppy waves into every chink and crevice of the grim stone wall, the grinding of the float against it, and the beat of water against the swinging boats.

They prevented his hearing not only the woman's words,

but also the movements of—two figures who came out of the darkness beyond the wall.

They crept up cautiously from the float on which they had been lurking, stealing up by slow degrees until they stood on the wall—scarce ten feet behind the crouching detective.

One of them was Giuseppe Cardenio.

The massive, muscular, roughly clad figure of the other, hardly more than half clad, in fact; his huge, bare head and neck, his shaggy breast and brawny arms, with sleeves rolled above his elbows; his fierce, swarthy face and gleaming black eyes—there could be no mistaking him.

He strode nearer with a revolver leveled, while Cardenio drew a knife, and the voice of the massive ruffian fell with a threatening snarl on the night air.

"Get up! *Carambo!* you shall go in instead of spying outside. Shove up your hands!"

Chick Carter already was upon his feet, and gazing, over the deadly weapon that covered him, at the scowling face and merciless eyes of—Antonio Gargoni.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAN BEHIND THE GUN.

If Chick Carter felt any surprise at the threatening turn of affairs, any dismay upon beholding Gargoni, whom he instantly recognized, as well as his companion, he did not betray his feelings. He obeyed the scowling ruffian, however, as any sane man would have done, and quickly held up his hands.

At the same time, nevertheless, he coolly exclaimed:

"Oh, it's you, Gargoni. This looks very much like an ambush. So you are at your knavish work again. I wondered what had become of you."

"Well, you've found out," Gargoni replied, with a growl. "It's like to cost you something, too, for butting into my business."

"Oh, this is not the first time," said Chick confidently.

"And well I know it," snarled the burly Italian. "I've not forgotten what I owe you. I'll pay it with interest, too, now that I've got you."

"That's the true business principle," Chick replied dryly. "Always pay your debts with interest. Take a care, meantime, that you don't throw a shoe."

"*Porcco Dio!* you'll not fool me a second time."

"Perhaps not."

"Go behind him, Cardenio, and get his gun."

"I have two," Chick put in coolly. "You'd better take both, Cardenio."

"I'll take them, all right," said the other, with a leer. "Trust me for that."

"That's as far as any sane man would trust you."

Cardenio's only reply was a low laugh, while he slipped Chick's revolvers into his own pockets, and while Gargoni growled a bit impatiently:

"Get his bracelets, too. Fit him with his own bangles, and let him see how he likes them. A tight fit, mind you, with his hands behind him. Now bring that strip of marline from the float. I'll fix him so he cannot escape."

Chick submitting without resistance, the commands were executed nearly as rapidly as they were given. Within a couple of minutes, he not only was tightly handcuffed, but his arms also were secured to his body with a piece of marline, making him as powerless as if confined in a strait-jacket.

Then, venting a growl of malevolent satisfaction, Gargoni grasped him by the shoulder and led him into the house.

"Lock the door," said he, glancing back at Cardenio, who followed him.

Chick found himself in a narrow, dimly lighted entry. A flight of bare stairs led to the floor above. A thread of light appeared under a closed door some eight feet away, evidently that of a room adjoining the lighted kitchen into which he was conducted. There were three women in the room, all seated at a table near one of the walls. There were a bottle and several glasses on the table. One of the women was Lucy Lazzero; another, Gargoni's fat and greasy wife. The third was his daughter, Theresa Gargoni, and her strong, darkly handsome face lighted with vicious malice when the bound detective was brought into the room.

"*Sapristi!*" she cried quickly. "We meet again, you fool, Carter! I've been hoping for it—hoping for it!"

"And you're not alone in that, Miss Gargoni," Chick curtly retorted, while her burly father forced him to a chair near the inner wall. "I, too, have been hoping for it."

"You have, eh?" sneered Theresa, with her black eyes dilating suspiciously.

"Yes, as fervently as you."

"For what, eh? You've got nothing on me."

"No. But I knew that when we met you would be up to some kind of deviltry, and I'm always eager to meet scamps when they're so employed."

"Ha!" the girl laughed shrilly. "You'll be less eager when you learn what's coming to you."

"Possibly."

"You'll not trick me again as you did in Bayard Street."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Chick. "I have more tricks up my sleeve than you have brains to anticipate—much less head off."

"Is that so" snapped Theresa, more sharply. "I have something here, then, that will head them off."

She drew open her loose waist with a quick, passionate movement, and displayed the handle of a stiletto concealed in her clothing.

"Try tricking me again and you'll feel its sting," she added, with venomous asperity.

Chick shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"Enough of that, girl," growled Gargoni. "We waste time and keep another waiting. Come with me, all but the old woman. You keep a sharp eye on him, mind you, and cry out if he stirs."

The last was addressed to Madame Gargoni, while the others, yielding hurriedly to the commands of the massive ruffian, hastened into the adjoining room. Gargoni followed them and closed the door, leaving Chick alone with the Italian's frowning, red-featured wife.

Having left the Lexington Avenue flat before Lena Beverly told Nick what little she knew about Lucy Lazzero's relations with Cardenio and Theresa Gargoni, Chick could only conjecture how and to what extent these Italians figured in the case.

He had no reason to suppose, in fact, that Nick knew anything about them in connection with the matter concerning Miss Beverly, and he felt that he had fallen into a trap from which he must extricate himself single-handed.

Chick's perplexity, however, was not of long duration. He had heard Gargoni speak of another, and, sitting with his back to the wall between the two rooms, he soon

found that he was near the funnel hole of an old chimney, then out of use, and that he could faintly hear through the wall paper covering the hole the voices in the next room, the chimney once having served both, and both funnel holes evidently being covered with only a single thickness of paper.

Furtively watching Madame Gargoni, Chick saw that she suspected nothing, and he bent his head a little nearer and found that he could distinguish much that was being said in the other room. He had listened only briefly when, confirming Gargoni's remark, he heard the voice of another—obviously, that of a man.

"But why were the Carters there? What sent them to the flat?" he was forcibly asking, in tones imbued with perplexity and impatience. "How did they get wise to anything off color?"

"How do I know?" Lucy Lazzero curtly answered. "I'm no clairvoyant. I only know they were there, and had been there for some time before I showed up with Cardenio."

"You saw them?"

"I saw that the front room was lighted, and the shadow of a man fell on one of the curtains. I knew, then, that the trick had fallen flat, and that Lena was none the worse for having seen the dummy stiff. So we laid low in an opposite doorway until Chick Carter came out, and then we fixed the frame-up by which we have landed him."

"H'm, just so," thought Chick. "That explains it. I'm glad to learn how 'twas done."

"But Cardenio tells me that you went into the flat," said the man.

"So I did, Mr. Maddock, of course," Lucy quickly rejoined. "I went in precisely as if I knew nothing about the job. I put up a bluff to that effect—but it didn't go down."

"Go down? What do you mean?"

"Down Nick Carter's throat. He would not swallow it. He knew I was lying; I could tell that by his looks. Besides, he already had sent Chick Carter out to watch for me, which shows he suspected me of having had a hand in the game. I made an easy get-away, all right, and——"

"Easy—yes, of course," put in Theresa Gargoni significantly. "But there's only one reason for that."

"One reason, Rita "

"Sure."

"What's that?"

"You were let go only that Chick Carter might trail you to your confederates," Theresa shrewdly pointed out. "But for that, Lulu, you'd have been nipped then and there."

"Mebbe."

"That's all there was to it, Jack, and it's dead lucky that Cardenio was with her, enabling us to get the infernal sleuth, instead of he getting us.

"Jack Maddock," thought Chick, with ears alert. "Miss Beverly's cousin, and the son of the New Rochelle lawyer. Plainly enough, now, these Italians have been working out a scheme for that couple. I'm picking up the links in the chain, all right, in spite of my own mishap, and I yet may contrive to use them. If I can discover the stake for which these rascals are playing—but that may come later."

"You don't think, then, that they have made the one important discovery?" Jack Maddock questioned, in reply to Theresa.

"No," she said quickly. "That's impossible."

"But how did they learn anything about the case?"

"Give it up. Ask me an easier one."

"That's what beats me."

"They have a nasty way of learning things, these Carters," growled Gargoni.

"Well, it leaves me all in the dark," Jack added. "I don't know how to proceed. If I could find out from whom they got their information, for some one must have given them a pointer, I should know just what to do. The dummy was not to be put in the flat until three this afternoon——"

"Nor was it, Jack, as I wrote you," Theresa Gargoni declared, interrupting.

"Wrote me?" Maddock quickly echoed.

"Sure."

"But I have received no letter. I supposed you sent none."

"You told me to write, didn't you?"

"Yes, but——"

"Did you call for it?"

"Yes. At the main office late this afternoon."

"It should have been there," cried Theresa. "I wrote it in the flat after fixing the layout. I dropped it soon after three o'clock. It should have gone to the general delivery, as you instructed."

"Did you use the fictitious name I directed?" Maddock inquired.

"Yes, of course. I addressed the envelope—N. Cotter, New York City."

"It's mighty strange, then, that I failed to get it. I called for a letter having that address at six o'clock this evening. It must be that——"

"Say-!" Cardenio suddenly exclaimed.

"Here's where they get wise," thought Chick, quick to detect in the rascal's voice what he had in his mind.

"Well?" Maddock's chair grated noisily on the bare floor when he swung round.

"I've got it," said Cardenio. "I can set you right."

"What do you mean?"

"The letter was addressed to N. Cotter, you say?"

"Yes."

"But Rita's writing is like hen tracks in mud. N. Cotter—how in thunder did you hit upon that name?"

"Only by chance," said Maddock impatiently. "I didn't dare risk using my own in such a shady affair. But why?"

"Why?" echoed Cardenio derisively. "That's a fat question. It's plain enough to me. The letter went to Nick Carter, instead of N. Cotter, and that's what put him wise to something in the flat. That's what sent him there, and the little the letter contained is all he really knows about the job."

"Cardenio is right!" roared Gargoni irrepressibly.

"You can bet I'm right," added Cardenio exultantly.

"What do you think, Theresa?" Maddock demanded.

"I think that's just the size of it," Theresa also declared. "I admit that my writing wouldn't win a prize. The letter went to Nick Carter and he opened it by mistake. It contained only enough to arouse his suspicions, however, and send him to the flat. All he really knows about the case would—bah! it would cut no ice whatever. The letter related only to the layout. Not a name was mentioned—not one."

These emphatic declarations were followed by a brief period of silence.

Chick listened intently. He rightly inferred that Jack Maddock was weighing the full significance of what he had learned, of all that had transpired, and was measuring every contingency that might follow.

"He's the man behind the gun, all right," thought Chick. "He and his father are the rascals responsible for this job. They have merely hired these Italians to do their own knavish work, thus aiming to skulk in the background and avoid suspicion. But what's their game? Why are they out to kill Lena Beverly? How can they benefit from her death, if she has no property, as she stated. A life insurance, perhaps. By Jove, I don't think Nick asked her about that. That may be the stake. H'm, they're off again."

Jack Maddock had sized up the situation. As he had predicted, he now thought he saw his way clearly. His voice had a more confident ring.

"It's all right," he declared. "If what you say is true, no great harm has been done. The trick might have failed, you know, even if the Carters had not queered it. They have nothing on us, barring that infernal sleuth in the kitchen, and we must dispose of him forever. That is to say, after we have collared the coin. In the meantime, we must confine him in safe quarters."

"We'd better get rid of him at once," growled Gargoni. "Sink him in the East River, and that will end him."

"Not yet, Tony." Maddock firmly insisted. "I want the coin before going as far as that. Having got it—well, I then may be willing to take a chance of the chair. We can hang on to him, all right."

"But not here," put in Theresa decidedly. "Nick Carter is no fool. He'll learn from Miss Beverly that Lulu is a friend of mine, and then he'll suspect me of being in this game."

"That's right, too," Gargoni quickly agreed. "He'll suspect all of us, in fact, and get after us like a ferret after rats. We cannot keep Chick Carter here."

"I know all that," Maddock curtly replied. "I don't want you to keep him here. There are quarters in my place from which he cannot escape. The old man is game, with half a million at stake, and we'll make sure that Chick Carter gets in no more of his crafty work. We'll fix him."

"Great Scott!" Chick mentally exclaimed. "Half a million at stake. That's a horse of another color. But where the dickens is half a million coming from? Fix me, eh? I'll see about that, since I'm not to be turned down until after the coin has been landed. I'll yet contrive to give you rascals a run for the money."

These thoughts flashed through Chick's mind while he continued listening to the knavish discussion.

"You mean, Jack, that Chick Carter must be taken to your place?" Theresa Gargoni questioned.

"Yes, of course."

"That's not so bad."

"It's infernally good, you'll find. We can look after him there, all right."

"But it must be done before Nick Carter can——" Gargoni began.

"It must be done to-night," Maddock interrupted. "Delays are dangerous. You must bring him round there in your launch, Gargoni, while I hike home in an auto and put the old man wise to what has occurred. It's only one o'clock. You can make the run to our place in less than two hours and be back here before daylight."

"I can do that, all right," Gargoni quickly allowed.

"Get at it, then, immediately after I leave."

"Wait a bit," put in Theresa. "That part of it's all right, Jack, but how about the girl? Lulu says Nick Carter has sent her to a lodging house. It's a hundred to one that his suspicions have caused him to undertake protecting her. It will not be easy, in that case, to pull off another job on Lena Beverly."

"Rats!" Maddock exclaimed contemptuously. "I'll find a way to fool Nick Carter, or bluff him, and also get the best of the girl. He'll have to put her in a jail, instead of a lodging house, to keep her out of my clutches."

"But——"

"Oh, there's nothing to it," Maddock forcibly insisted. "I know how it can be done. I'll use that lover of hers, Dorrington, as a decoy in some way. You leave that part of the work to me."

"By gracious, that might be done!" Theresa exclaimed.

"Can and must be done, you mean," said Maddock. "You do what I direct, Gargoni, and leave the rest to me."

"Right!" Gargoni gruffly cried. "I'll do my part. I'll have that cursed screw at your place before three o'clock."

"Good!" Maddock declared, rising abruptly. "I'll be there to give him a warm welcome."

"And unless I'm much mistaken, or you are much more clever than I suspect, I'll make it mighty warm for you soon after we get there."

The last arose with grim anticipations in Chick's mind, while he straightened up in his chair and leaned away from the wall. For he heard the scuffling feet of his captors, when they arose to return to the kitchen.

CHAPTER VII.

NICK TAKES A HAND.

Nine o'clock the following morning found Nick Carter seated in his study. His only companion was his second best assistant, Patsy Garvan. Both wore an expression of unusual gravity, perplexity, and grim forebodings, occasioned chiefly by Chick's prolonged absence.

"It strikes me, chief, that you have sized it up correctly," Patsy was saying. "He must have picked up the Lazzero girl when she left the flat, or some man who accompanied her home and left her at the door, and the trail must have led Chick into a mess of some kind. But that, if correct, doesn't help us very much," Patsy dubiously added. "He must be in awfully wrong, chief, or we should have heard from him."

"Wrong is right, Patsy," Nick said sententiously. "He has fallen into the hands of the Gargoni gang, I think."

"Because the Lazzero girl is friendly with Cardenio?"

"Partly."

"You think he accompanied her home?"

"That seems more than probable. It may be, too, that they saw Chick outside, and afterward got him by means of a frame-up, hurriedly agreed upon."

"Mebbe so."

"Be that as it may, Patsy, he certainly is in wrong, as you say, and we must get busy," Nick added. "There seems to be more and more to this case the deeper I look into it. Somebody expects to benefit handsomely from the death of Lena Beverly. Otherwise, that somebody would not have gone so far as to attempt murder, even despite that the method employed would ordinarily hide the crime."

"Surely," Patsy tersely agreed. "But we know the girl now is safe in Mrs. Wort's lodging house."

"Yes. She phoned me half an hour ago."

"I don't see how the Gargoni gang can benefit by her death," Patsy argued. "She has no property, you say, nor any life insurance."

"Neither—unless she is misinformed."

"By whom?"

"Her uncle, with whom she has dwelt since she was three years of age, may have concealed something from her. He and his son are her only relatives. Other circumstances, moreover, indicate that they are the big fingers in this affair."

"How so, chief? What circumstances?"

"Jack Maddock's love, to begin with, and his wish to marry the girl," Nick explained. "His affection is not of long standing. It sprang up like a mushroom in a night. That, together with the fact that his father has insisted upon the marriage so violently as to alarm Miss Beverly and drive her from home, is decidedly significant. Take it from me, Patsy, those two men know there is something to be gained by the marriage."

"I guess you're right, chief, as far as that goes."

"Caleb Maddock evidently is a harsh and mercenary man, moreover, who was willing for the girl to quit work in his house and begin a stage career, providing she gave him half of her income for five years. Now, however, he wants to take her from the stage and marry her to his son. Would it be like such a man to throw up a promised income—unless he saw how to acquire a larger one?"

"Gee!" Patsy exclaimed, quick to see the point. "That does look, for fair, as if the girl has property she doesn't know about. Old Maddock is a lawyer, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"The old rat may be trustee of something belonging to the girl, then, and holding it back until she consents to the marriage."

"In that case, in view of his present designs, he would not have allowed her to leave home at all to go on the stage," Nick pointed out.

"That's true. You're right again, chief."

"In other words, Patsy, the stake must be something quite recently discovered," Nick added. "This whole business, mind you—young Maddock's love, his proposal, his father's violent attempt at coercion, Miss Beverly's flight, her taking a flat at the suggestion of a treacherous friend, and one very probably in the employ of the Maddocks, and finally the cowardly trick to fatally affect her by means of that shocking semblance of a death chamber—this whole business has transpired within about a month."

"That's true."

"Take it from me, then, Patsy, it must have been begun immediately after the stake was discovered."

"I see the point," nodded Patsy.

"What, then, did the Maddocks discover about a month ago, of which Miss Beverly evidently knows nothing, yet which makes a marriage with her extremely desirable; or her death equally profitable to her heirs."

"Caleb Maddock and son?"

"Exactly. They are her only relatives."

"Gee! that's a pertinent question, chief," Patsy declared. "What, indeed, did they discover?"

"I shall try to find out."

"You are going to New Rochelle?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"This morning. I want a look at these Maddocks, father and son, and an interview with both."

"What about Chick?"

"I shall start you on his trail."

"Good! What's the scheme?"

"You must find out where Tony Gargoni is living, what he is doing, and who are with him," said Nick. "Go down to Bayard Street where he lived when we arrested him for that Canal Street job, and make a few inquiries. Some of his old cronies know where he now is quartered."

"He used to be a longshoreman and worked around the docks."

"He never worked, Patsy, when he could get the coin by any kind of a knavish job. Find out whether Cardenio is with him, and what they are doing, or pretending to do."

"I'll get next, chief, all right," said Patsy confidently.

"This afternoon," Nick added; "you'd better go to the Hippodrome. I'll give you a line that will admit you to the stage during the matinée. See whether Lucy Lazzero is there, and find out where she is living. I'll wager she hasn't gone back to that flat. We must spread a net that will take in all of these suspects. Through one or another we shall get at the truth."

"I'm wise," said Patsy. "Anything more "

"Not at present," said Nick. "The work mentioned will keep you busy. You may be governed by what you learn, if you think it important and immediate action necessary."

"I shall know what to do," replied Patsy, rising. "You can bet on that, chief, and leave the rough and scuff of the gang to me."

Two hours later, or shortly before noon, Nick Carter arrived in New Rochelle and called at the office of the lawyer. He found the door locked and the office presumably deserted. A man occupying the one adjoining it, however, heard Nick turn the knob and he stepped into the corridor.

"Looking for Mr. Maddock?" he inquired.

"Yes," said Nick.

"He hasn't been here for several days. He don't pay much attention to business. You'll probably find him at home."

"Near by?"

"No. He lives quite a distance out of town. He bought the place several years ago, when he began to quit business. The owner died and he got it for a song. Shall I direct you how to find it?"

"If you please," said Nick.

The directions took him well out of town and into a sparsely settled, woody section overlooking the Sound. He found the place with no great difficulty, however, despite its desolation. It proved to be a wooden dwelling of considerable size, with a stable and outbuildings, all surrounded with oaks and pines that grew nearly down to the shore. Obviously, it once had been the shore place of a person of means, though it then bore the marks of time and weather.

Nick gazed across the ill-kept grounds, but could see no one in or near the house. A plank walk led down to the shore, from which a small stone pier protruded, with a flat old skiff made fast to a ringbolt in one of the rocks.

The aspect of the house and surroundings did not impress Nick favorably, but his face reflected none of his thoughts when he walked around to the front of the house and banged a huge brass knocker on the door. The clang

was echoed almost immediately by the thumping tread of feet on the hardwood floor of the hall. Then the door was opened by a smoothly shaved, hard-featured man in the sixties, with grizzled hair and bristling brows, from under which a pair of sharp, searching, gray eyes were fixed upon the face of the detective.

"I am looking for Mr. Maddock," said Nick, with some suavity.

"Father or son?" The voice of the man was as hard as his face.

"Mr. Caleb Maddock."

"I am Caleb Maddock."

"Ah!" Nick murmured. "Can you give me a few minutes? I would like to talk with you and your son, also."

"Jack's not here. He's gone to the city."

"I will see you alone, then. My name is Carter."

"Carter? What Carter?"

"Nicholas Carter."

"The detective?"

"Yes."

Caleb Maddock's hard face and stony stare underwent a slight change. He betrayed neither surprise, misgivings, nor any special interest, however, but he buttoned the seedy gray coat he was wearing, and took a woolen cap from a peg behind the door.

"Take one of the piazza chairs," said he. "It's pleasanter out of doors than in the house. I have heard of you, Mr. Carter, but don't recall ever having met you. Will you smoke a cigar! Not just the brand you fancy, perhaps, but the best I can afford. Good cigars go rank quicker than poor ones in the dampness so near the water. You're a younger man than I supposed. What can I do for you?"

Caleb Maddock tendered a very large black cigar while speaking, then drew up a chair toward that which the detective had taken.

Nick had, in the meantime, sized up the man. Cool, crafty, calculating, a man with next to no principle, but with enough discernment and cunning to cover his tracks when violating the law, and a man who could not be easily bluffed or bullied. Such was Nick's measure of Mr. Caleb Maddock. He saw, moreover, that Maddock appeared perfectly at ease, which was evidence enough that he felt sure of himself and his position, despite that Nick felt equally sure of his guilt. All this led Nick to shape a less aggressive course than he adopted a little later.

"I have called, Mr. Maddock," he replied, "to make a few inquiries concerning your ward, Lena Beverly."

"Humph!" Maddock ejaculated, with teeth snapping quickly. "What about her? What's she been doing? Gone wrong, has she? Well, it's no more than I have expected. You needn't look to me to help her out, Mr. Carter. I'm done with the graceless jade."

"Don't misunderstand me," Nick replied. "Miss Beverly is not in a position to require your assistance."

"Lucky for her, then. She'd not get it."

"Have you seen her recently?"

"No. Not for several weeks."

"Do you know where she is living?"

"Somewhere in Lexington Avenue. I don't know the number."

"Your son, perhaps, could inform me."

"I don't think so." Maddock stared sharply. "Besides, he's not here."

"He will return, I suppose."

"But Jack now has no relations with the girl, nor even sees her, since she refused to marry him. She defied us both and fled from the house that had sheltered her since childhood. She's an ungrateful jade. She might have married my son and dwelt here the rest of her life, with a good home and the privilege to care for me in my old age, as was her duty after all I have done for her. But, no! she cast duty to the winds and went her own wayward course. She may go to the devil, sir, for all I care."

Nick listened without interrupting, but with no apparent interest in the other's wrath, which seemed to be perfectly genuine. He knocked the ashes from his cigar and inquired:

"Why were you so set upon the marriage, Mr. Maddock?"

"For the reasons stated, Mr. Carter, and then some," Maddock blurted brusquely. "Jack loved the girl. There is work to be done here. The two could have got on nicely. I could have seen my way clear to the end of my life. But, no, nothing of the kind for the jade. She had plans of her own and ignored mine. Well, well, she has made her bed, and may lie in it. I'm done with her."

"I see," said Nick tentatively.

"But what has she done, that you come here to inquire about her?" Maddock demanded suspiciously.

"Nothing," said Nick.

"Nothing "

"What was done, Mr. Maddock, was not her doing," Nick added. "She is the mark, I feel reasonably sure, of persons who expect, or hope, at least, to benefit by her death."

"Nonsense!"

"Let me tell you what occurred yesterday in the flat in Lexington Avenue."

"Well, I am listening."

Nick informed him only briefly, for he still felt sure that his hearer knew all about it; and Maddock listened without a sign of surprise, sentiment, or even interest. He did remark, however, when Nick had concluded:

"A dummy figure, eh? Laid out like a corpse, or suicide? That's quite extraordinary, Mr. Carter, I'll admit. What do you make of it?"

"I have called to ask you what you make of it," Nick replied.

"Bah! I make nothing of it. I care nothing about it."

"Have you any idea who put it there?"

"Not the slightest."

"Or with what object in view?"

"No."

"Are you acquainted with a man named Antonio Gargoni?"

"Never heard of him."

"Or his daughter, Theresa Gargoni?"

"No."

"Do you know of any person who would benefit by the death of Miss Beverly "

"I do not. That is to say, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless a man with whom she is said to be in love, and for whom she turned down my son, I suppose, now wants her out of his way," Mr. Maddock said, harshly. "But I know nothing about it—and care less."

"You refer to a man named Dorrington?"

"Yes."

"Do you know him?"

"No. I never even saw him."

"I'm inclined to think Miss Beverly's moral character is above suspicion," Nick said pointedly. "There is a very large stake, I suspect, for which a play is being made. A small one would not warrant the risk of murder. You're in a position, Mr. Maddock, to know whether Miss Beverly has any property. Has she any?"

"No, nothing."

"Any in prospect?"

"No."

"What can you tell me about her father, her mother, or any other relatives whom she may have had? I wish to find out——"

"Stop a moment," Maddock interrupted. "Has she employed you to look into the matter and make these inquiries?"

The curt monosyllables with which he had been responding, for the most part, evinced the flinty, intolerant nature of the man. He had lost a little color under the questioning to which Nick had subjected him, but his sharp, gray eyes were brighter and more threatening, while a nervous twitching of his thin lips denoted that he was restraining himself with some difficulty.

Nick Carter appeared oblivious to these signs of suppressed feeling. He shook his head and replied:

"No, she has not employed me to do so. I took it upon myself."

"You did, eh?"

"Yes."

"Why did you butt into the matter?" Maddock bluntly demanded.

"I felt an interest in the girl."

"For what reason?"

"Because, Mr. Maddock, when a gang of crooks are out to wrong an unprotected, virtuous girl, it's time for men of my vocation, if no other, to butt in and shield her by rounding up the rascals," Nick said sternly. "That's why, Mr. Maddock, and that's precisely what I intend to do."

Maddock was upon his feet, frowning like a thunder-cloud, before the last was said.

"Well, let me tell you one thing, Carter," he replied, with lips twitching and voice half choked with rage: "I know nothing about this matter and care nothing about it. If you have come out here to question me, thinking I'm in any way culpable, or that you have picked up a thread worth following, you have made a mistake, and may go to the devil. That's all, sir, and now you'd better hike back home—for you'll get no more out of me."

Nick arose without a change of countenance.

"Very well," he said simply, turning to go.

He refrained from saying what he had in mind, refrained from showing with what keen insight he had measured this man. If he had done both, as one with less patience and self-possession would have done, Mr. Maddock might have collapsed then and there—or he might not.

Nick Carter never struck until he knew the iron was hot.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHANGE OF BASE.

Chick Carter did not get so much as a glimpse at Jack Maddock, when the latter left Gargoni's house on the water front. The burly Italian closed the kitchen door, that his visitor might depart unseen, and a few moments later he strode into the room with his daughter and Cardenio.

"Show Lulu up to my room," said Theresa, addressing her mother. "She'll stay here to-night, but I'm not yet ready for bed. I want this fly gun out of the house before I sleep."

"That won't take long," growled Gargoni, with a lowering glance at Chick. "Fix a gag in his mouth, Cardenio, and then go out and haul the launch up to the float. We can be under way in ten minutes."

"Sure thing! We can make Maddock's place, too, before he gets home."

"I can see his finish," put in Theresa, addressing Gargoni, with a look of evil triumph in her black eyes. "Once he gets the coin, it'll be Mr. Jack Maddock for me, with a grip on the purse strings—or there'll be the devil to pay.

"He'll knuckle," said Gargoni, nodding. "We shall have him on the hip, for fair, after croaking Carter. Put on your hood and raincoat."

"What's that for?"

"You're going with us."

"For what?"

"Maddock said so," growled Gargoni. "His mother's a cripple and confined to her room. He has fired her maid and wants you to fill her place until this job is ended. He's got a woman in the kitchen who won't squeal. They're the only ones in the house."

"When did he tell you that?"

"At the door."

"It's good enough for me," nodded Theresa. "I'll be with you in five minutes. It will let me keep an eye on you, too, the devil take you."

The last was addressed with a venomous look at Chick, before she turned and hurried from the room.

A gag then prevented Chick from replying. He returned her malevolent glance, however, and was content with that.

Cardenio had left the house to obey the orders given him.

Gargoni had put on heavy garments and an oilskin hat and coat. He was pulling several coarse blankets from a closet in one corner. He gave them to Theresa when she returned.

"Lug those out," he said gruffly. "I'll bring the gun and leave the old woman to close up."

"I have told her," Theresa muttered.

"Come on," said Gargoni, seizing Chick by the shoulder.

Chick had no alternative. He accompanied the ruffian from the house and down to the float, on which the others then were waiting. The launch was lying alongside, an old, weather-beaten craft, but of considerable size and speed. There was ample room in her for thrice their number, and Chick submissively stretched himself upon the floor aft, to which Gargoni grimly pointed, and then threw an old blanket over him.

"That'll keep him from seeing and being seen," said he, with his habitual growl.

"Cast off, Cardenio. I'll spark her and then take the wheel. You two can keep an eye on this dog."

Theresa Gargoni had settled herself in a huddled crouch on one of the stern seats.

Cardenio cast off the bow line, giving the wheel a turn, and then came aft and joined the girl.

Gargoni got the launch under way in another moment, and the ugly, low-lying craft glided like an evil shadow

out of the narrow dock, rapidly gaining speed, and soon was plunging through the choppy waves and heading through Hell Gate for Stony Point.

Peering from under the blanket a few minutes later, the pitching of the launch enabled Chick to catch sight of the light on Hallet's Point, and he knew that they were well away on their night run.

Nothing broke the monotony of it, or nothing more than an occasional heavy lurch of the boat when she fell into the trough of the sea, or now and then the splashing of a breaking wave over her windward rail. For not a word was spoken, and hardly a movement made by the grimly lowering couple crouching on the stern seats.

Nearly two hours had passed, as well as Chick could judge, when Cardenio arose abruptly and went forward to join Gargoni at the wheel.

The launch had run into calm water and was speeding along a few hundred yards from the shore. The land looked black in the darkness. Unlighted dwellings were not discernible. The background of woods and hills could be determined only by the irregular outline against the starry sky.

Two glowing lights suddenly leaped out of the gloom in the near distance—those of an automobile that had been turned around and then brought to a stop. Two men sprang out of the car, and were joined by a third, and soon all three were hurrying down to the shore.

A lantern waved to and fro, and a voice from over the water cried hoarsely—the gruff voice of Tony Gargoni:

"How's the water in there?"

"Deep enough. Run in slowly and make fast to the pier."

"That's Jack Maddock's voice," said Cardenio. "He's outrun us."

"The auto lights told me that," growled Gargoni.

"I wonder who brought him out."

Gargoni made no reply. He was intent upon making the landing. He succeeded presently, and Chick heard the grinding of the boat's fender against the pier.

"Get up!" Theresa Gargoni commanded, kicking off the canvas covering. "Get up and come ashore. You're a step nearer the end of your rope. Trick me, will you? Jail me, eh? I've not forgotten Bayard Street, the devil take you! He will, too, all right. I'll make sure he gets you."

These bitter remarks and sanguinary threats came with vicious asperity from the girl, while Chick was getting up with some difficulty and picking his footing over the boat's rail and upon the narrow pier.

Gargoni then grasped his arm, leaving Cardenio to secure the launch, and Chick presently found himself confronting the three men waiting on the shore, and in a position to size up the house and surroundings, though he could make out but little in the darkness. He had his first look at Jack Maddock, however, who was a square-shouldered, athletic man of forty, with dark features and a heavy black mustache.

Another of the trio was Caleb Maddock, of whose identity Chick had not a doubt. The third evidently was the chauffeur of the car, a thin, sinister-eyed fellow in the twenties. That his face was not a libel on his character was apparent in Jack Maddock's first words.

"Shake hands with Jim Daly, Gargoni," said he, by way of introduction. "He's all right."

"That's what I told Cardenio," grinned Gargoni, while he complied.

"I'm all right for a price," said Daly, with a significant leer.

"You'll have no kick coming on the price," said Jack assuringly; then, with a glance at Chick: "Bring him along, Gargoni, and we'll stow him away for the night."

"What about the girl?"

"That's all fixed. I'll get away with her to-morrow, with Daly's help, and will have her out here soon after dark. It will puzzle the devil himself, or Nick Carter, even, to tell what's become of her. I've got further instructions for you, too, but they'll keep till later. We'll begin with getting rid of this fellow."

Chick stumbled after them over the rough ground. He was not much pleased with the outlook. He could hear the elder Maddock talking in subdued tones with Tony Gargoni, but could distinguish nothing that was said.

They were met at the back door of the house by a robust, red-featured woman with a lamp, who at once conducted Chick and Jack Maddock up a flight of back stairs and into an unfurnished room, evidently in a wing of the house. A five-foot wainscot covered the walls, and Maddock quickly removed a square section of it by pressing a secret spring, revealing a heavy sliding door in the wall. Pushing it to one side, a square closet about six feet long and three feet wide was disclosed, on the floor of which were an old mattress and some blankets.

Maddock did not mince matters. He gazed at Chick for a moment, then said grimly:

"You're in wrong, Carter, and must take your medicine. I'm going to keep you in here for a time. You cannot get out, nor would you be heard if you yelled your head off. But I'll not stand for that, all the same, nor am I inclined to torture you. Will you keep quiet, if I remove that gag?"

Chick quickly nodded.

"Your word is good to that extent," said Maddock. "Turn round."

Chick obeyed.

Maddock removed the gag, then thrust the detective into the secret closet and quickly closed the sliding door.

Chick heard the sharp click of a powerful spring, followed by the crash of the section of sheathing, which Maddock forcibly replaced and secured. Then ensued a silence like that of a tomb, a stillness the more intense because of the inky darkness, a gloom that one might have cut with a knife.

Chick stretched himself as best he could on the mattress and fell to sizing up the situation. He realized that any immediate move to escape would surely prove futile. Not until the rascals felt that he was not likely to make it, could it be wisely or safely made. Chick, therefore, decided to put in a little sleep, and await developments.

Within ten minutes he was in a profound slumber, from which he did not awaken until aroused by the removal of the sheathing again. A moment later the sliding door was again pushed aside, and Jack Maddock appeared at the opening. He came only to bring Chick some food and water, however, and he waited for him to partake of them.

Chick thought he best could relax the rascal's vigilance by sticking to his promise. He did not speak, nor show any inclination to ask a question.

Chick saw through the window, however, that the morning was well spent, it being after ten o'clock, as near as

he could judge. Not a word passed between the two men, however, and Chick was again left in the gloomy hole to which he had been consigned. He could not hear a sound from outside. Not a ray of daylight penetrated the place. The air was close and stuffy, but perfectly dry and warm.

Chick waited several hours before he decided to attempt making a break for liberty. He could not have told, in fact, how long he had waited, save that he felt sure it was evening and another visit by Maddock seemed improbable.

"If he comes alone and I can free myself from these bonds, I can get the best of him," he said to himself. "On the other hand, if I'm caught while making the attempt, they may change me to some other place from which the trick may be turned more easily. I'll give it a try, at all events."

Chick already had laid his plans. He had been deprived of his revolvers, but Cardenio had overlooked a strong clasp knife, which Chick carried in a specially made pocket back of his hip. Sitting upright, he found that he could, with a few contortions, reach the pocket with his fingers, and he soon succeeded in drawing out the knife.

It then was a comparatively easy matter to open it and cut the marline binding his arms, which gave him much more liberty to manipulate the handcuffs. By a trick with which Nick and all of his assistants were familiar, he succeeded in removing the irons, also, and then was free to undertake escaping from the confinement.

He began with sounding the walls with the butt of the knife, knocking gently on them to detect any hollow space beyond. He found that that in which the sliding door was built was of wood, seasoned to flinty hardness, and presenting too laborious a task, that of attempting to cut through it.

The opposite wall was of plaster, however, and Chick felt reasonably sure there was a room beyond it.

"I'll head that way and take a chance," he said to himself, after a careful examination. "I can cut through plaster and laths, all right, and may be lucky enough not to strike a brick wall."

He went at it with a will in the darkness, breaking away the plaster and cutting through lath after lath, until he had made an opening a foot wide and twice as long.

He then could feel the side timbers to which the laths were nailed, and also the rough plaster and laths of another partition. It yielded a little under pressure, and he muttered a bit exultantly:

"By Jove, I believe the partition is that of another room. I'll bet I can force my foot through it."

He drew back and thrust his leg through the hole, placed his foot squarely against the laths, and then he bore against them with all his strength.

His anticipations proved to be correct. A section of the wall gave way, crumbling to the floor, and Chick then thrust his arm through as far as he could reach and felt of the wall in each direction.

"By Jove, I have it," he muttered, after a moment. "I've cut through into the closet of a room. I can feel the wardrobe hooks on the wall. In one more minute, by thunder, I'll be in that closet, instead of this hole."

Chick again proved nearly as good as his word. He quickly broke away another portion of the partition, forming an opening through which he could pass.

He was about to do so, moreover, when he suddenly heard approaching steps and the sound of voices—those of people who were entering the room.

Chick drew back and waited, knife in hand.

A thread of light appeared under the closet door, and he could hear the voices of men, also that of a girl, but he could distinguish only a word now and then.

"Jack Maddock and his father," he muttered. "The girl is Lena Beverly. That rascal has contrived to abduct her, as he threatened last night. I'll wait a bit. H'm, they are threatening to kill her, unless she consents to the marriage."

For nearly ten minutes Chick waited and listened, catching a word now and then. Then, suddenly, he heard the men stride out of the room, closing the door and locking it.

The light remained—and the girl.

Chick slipped through the opening, tapped gently on the closet door, then opened it and stepped into the room.

Lena Beverly turned, white and affrighted, and viewed him as if she saw a ghost.

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Beverly," Chick said softly, approaching her. "I'm right here to pull you out of this scrape—and to land those rascals."

"Good Heaven!" gasped the girl, with a look of relief. "Is it really you, Mr. Carter?"

"None other," said Chick, taking her hand. "How did Maddock get you in his clutches again."

"By a trick," explained Lena hurriedly. "One of Mr. Dorrington's cards was brought to me as I was dressing to leave the theater, on which a line was written stating that he would have a taxicab waiting for me near the stage exit. Recognizing his card, I suspected nothing, for he knew of my distressing situation, I ran and sprang into the cab without a moment's hesitation. Jack Maddock was looking from the opposite window, but he instantly turned and seized me, while the chauffeur banged the door and drove rapidly away. I was overcome, and——"

"That's enough," Chick interrupted. "We'll now set about overcoming him. Is that door locked?"

"Yes."

"Never mind. I'll speedily unlock it, or force it. Wait while I——"

Chick broke off abruptly and listened.

There had come from below a sound he recognized only too quickly—the sharp, spiteful crack of a revolver.

CHAPTER IX.

A SURPRISED CROOK.

Patsy Garvan, following Nick's instructions, began his work with a visit to Bayard Street, with inquiries in several of the resorts known to have been frequented by Gargoni. Well aware that none of his countrymen would betray him, nor willingly aid a detective, Patsy wore a suitable disguise and made his inquiries circumspectly.

Despite his utmost endeavors, however, it was early afternoon before he could learn anything definite about Gargoni, and then only that he and his family were living in Harlem, and that Cardenio was boarding with them.

"Well, that's a beginning, for all it came like pulling a tooth," he said to himself. "I can find the rascal, all right, if he's anywhere in Harlem. But it now is nearly two, and I must tackle the Hippodrome, or disregard the chief's schedule, which wouldn't do at all. I'll leave Harlem till later."

According to instructions, therefore, Patsy arrived at the vast theater soon after the matinée performance had begun, and with the card Nick had given him he easily obtained admission to the stage, or to that part of it unseen from the front of the house. There he met with speedy success, easily learning from one of the stage directors, that both Lena Beverly and Lucy Lazzero were among the performers, both of whom were pointed out to him.

There was nothing for him to accost either of them, however, and he spent the time in trying to discover whether Miss Beverly was under espionage. He could detect no sign of anything of the kind, and at half past four he left the theater and went to Harlem to resume his search for Gargoni.

A visit to one of the precinct police stations put him on the right track. The captain in charge, with whom Patsy was very well acquainted, told him just where Gargoni was living, and that he was engaged in doing odd jobs along the water front.

Patsy did not inform him in return, however, why he wanted Gargoni. He hastened to the low quarter to which he was directed, where he soon found the house of the Italian.

Stealing around to the rear of the near building already mentioned, he had a look at the back yard in which Chick had been held up, and at the dock and float and launch. The boat then was hauled alongside the float, on which several bundles and a small trunk were lying, convincing Patsy that a move of some kind was soon to be made.

This was confirmed a little later by the appearance of both Gargoni and Cardenio from the house, bringing other bundles and a pasteboard hat box.

"Rita may want her fine feathers, so we'll take 'em along," Gargoni was saying.

"Might as well," returned Cardenio tersely.

"Stow the stuff on board, and then come in to supper."

"What time will we leave?"

"Soon after dark. It'll take a couple of hours to slip round there."

"Do you s'pose Jack will have got the girl?"

"Yes. Leastwise, he felt dead sure of it."

"With her out of the way, we ought to be sure of the coin."

"Maddock is sure of it. Stow the stuff on board and then come in."

Gargoni returned to the house.

Cardenio remained to obey the order given him.

Patsy Garvan's mind had been busy. He was reasonably sure where the crooks were going, and he saw the possibilities the situation presented.

"It won't be dark for half an hour, at least," he said to himself. "That will give me time to talk with Nick, if he has returned to the office. I'll tell him what I have learned, and then—well, it'll be for him to say."

Patsy stole out of his concealment and sought the nearest telephone pay station, where he rang up Nick's business office.

Joseph, the house servant, answered the call.

He informed Patsy that Nick had not returned, and then added information that immediately shaped the young detective's course.

Mrs. Wort, the landlady of the lodging house, had just telephoned that Miss Beverly had not returned from the theater, though it was more than an hour later than the time she had positively stated she would return. The woman had become very anxious about her missing charge, and had tried to inform Nick.

"By Jove, the trick has been turned," thought Patsy, after hanging up the receiver. "She's the girl those rascals referred to. It's up to me to get in my work, all right. Leave soon after dark, eh? It's turning dusk already, and—well, here goes!"

Patsy hastened back to his former place of concealment.

A light then was burning in the Italian's kitchen. The float and launch were deserted. He could see shadows on the kitchen curtains, however, denoting that the two men were making ready to depart.

Patsy stole across the yard and quietly boarded the launch.

Amidships, near the numerous packages that had been put on board was the sheet of canvas and an old blanket with which Chick had been covered the previous night.

Patsy shifted his revolvers to his side pockets. There was a look of grim determination on his fearless face. He curled himself on the deck, precisely where the canvas and blanket were lying, and then drew both of them over him.

"I reckon I'll get by in the darkness," he said to himself. "If not—well, there'll be rough-house here right off the reel."

Ten minutes passed and the darkness deepened.

Gargoni and Cardenio came out and boarded the launch, quickly getting her under way.

Patsy laughed in his sleeve.

Two hours passed and the same run was made that had been made the night before. On this occasion, however, a skiff was in tow, and Gargoni growled, as he slowed down about fifty yards from the landing opposite the Maddock place.

"The tide is lower than 'twas last night. I'll not risk running up to the pier. Throw the anchor."

Cardenio, who was with him at the wheel, hastened to obey.

The noise of the motor ceased. The anchor caught and the launch swung round with the tide. Then both men came striding aft.

"Put me ashore, Cardenio, and then come out and get Rita's trunk," said Gargoni. "She may want some of the stuff in it. We'll leave these other things till morning."

"All right," said Cardenio, hauling the skiff alongside.

Both men boarded her and Cardenio took the oars.

Patsy Garvan had not stirred.

Cardenio put Gargoni ashore, then pulled back to the launch. He took a turn of the skiff's painter around a cleat, then clambered over the rail and alighted on deck. He turned to where the trunk had been placed, and then he—stopped as if turned to stone.

Patsy Garvan was sitting on the trunk. He had a revolver in one hand, a pair of handcuffs in the other.

"Don't yip, Cardenio, or move," he said, with ominous quietude. "If you do, you'll be a dead one. Put your hands behind you and back up here."

"Perdition!" Cardenio gasped, going ghastly in an instant. "It's all off!"

"Right you are," said Patsy. "Take off your coat. I have a use for it. Hands behind you, now, and back up. 'All off,' is right, Cardenio."

CHAPTER X.

THE GAME AND THE STAKE.

It was nearly one o'clock when Nick Carter returned to New Rochelle after having interviewed Mr. Caleb Maddock, whose temper he had tested, and whose measure he had satisfactorily taken.

Nick dropped into a restaurant and partook of a light lunch, after which he put in an appearance at the post office, and introduced himself to the postmaster, one Mr. Gale, who soon recovered from his surprise at seeing the famous detective, and then invited him into his private office.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Carter?" he inquired, after they were seated. "I infer, of course, that you call on business."

"Yes, in a way," said Nick. "I suppose, Mr. Gale, that you see considerable of the mail that goes through this office?"

'Why, yes, to be sure. Not all of it, of course, but nearly all."

"You are acquainted with Caleb Maddock, the lawyer?"

"Yes, but not intimately. I don't know that I care to be."

"I understand," smiled the detective. "How much mail does he have?"

"Very little, indeed, since he began to neglect his business, what little he had. I don't think he receives half a dozen letters in a week."

"More than usual, recently, or less?"

"I have noticed no difference."

"Can you tell me with whom he has been corresponding? You may have noticed letters bearing a business card."

"I have not, nor do I think he has been doing any business. That is to say——" Mr. Gale hesitated for a moment, then added: "I'll confide something to you, Mr. Carter, though it's not quite within the rules."

"I will never mention it," said Nick.

"Very good. About six weeks ago, then, Maddock took out of this office a letter addressed to his ward, Miss Lena Beverly. I was led to notice it, and, in fact, examine it quite closely, for it came from the city of Rome, and bore the card of some civic office or officer. I could not determine which, for I do not read Italian. I saw in the mail on the following day, however, a letter addressed to Rome—in the handwriting of Caleb Maddock."

"Though the first letter was addressed to Miss Beverly?"

"Yes."

"Have you mentioned it to her?"

"No. She soon after took quarters in New York, and I have not seen her."

"Have you questioned Maddock?"

"I have not."

"Do you remember the address on the letter he mailed?"

"Not the name," said Mr. Gale. "I think it was sent, however, to some judicial person corresponding with our judge of probate. Really, Mr. Carter, that is all I can tell you."

"You have given me some very important information," Nick replied. "I am greatly obliged to you. Has there been any other foreign correspondence?"

"I have not seen any."

"That's all, then," said Nick, rising. "Say nothing to Maddock about this, nor about our interview."

"I will not, Mr. Carter." Gale readily promised.

Nick shook hands with him and departed. Ten minutes later, having made sure he was not observed, he entered Caleb Maddock's office with a skeleton key and relocked the door.

He searched the lawyer's desk, after opening it with a picklock, but he did not find what he was seeking.

There was a small square safe in one corner, closed and locked.

"An old boy," thought Nick, viewing it grimly. "I reckon I can work it."

He sat down on the floor in front of it. With his ear pressed to the door, close to the combination dial, he gently turned the knob. He found that he could hear the combination tumblers. The trick of thus opening a safe is an old one.

Nick worked on Caleb Maddock's safe for three hours, and then—opened it.

He searched it thoroughly, but again he failed to find what he was seeking.

"Not here—that's a sure thing," he said to himself. "Most likely, then, it is in his library desk. I'll turn crook, if necessary, to see the interior of that desk. I'll wait for darkness."

It was close upon nine o'clock that evening when Nick Carter, for the second time that day, approached the Maddock place. He looked more grimly determined than before. He proceeded with greater caution—for which there were obvious reasons.

An automobile with its lamps put out was standing near the stable.

Two figures down on the shore were dimly discernible in the starlight. Nick recognized one of them—that of Theresa Gargoni. The other wore a chauffeur's coat and cap.

The couple appeared to be watching a moving lantern, then a mile or more away.

Nick watched them only briefly. He stole completely around the house, noting that a front chamber was lighted, also a wing room on the second floor. From the latter came the sound of voices, but he could distinguish nothing that was said.

He crept back and saw a robust woman washing dishes in the kitchen. Then, moving more rapidly, he presently brought up at a French window of the library, and he saw that the lighted room was deserted.

Nick thrust his knife blade between the sections of the window, then deftly sprung them open. He listened for a moment, till sure he had not been heard. Then he walked into the room and seated himself at a roll-top desk near one of the walls. It was locked. He opened it with a picklock. Then he drew a revolver and laid it in front of him.

Nick then began to search the pigeonholes and drawers, as coolly as if seated at his own desk in his Madison Avenue house.

It took him five minutes to find what he was seeking—the letter from Rome. It took him only as many seconds to open it and learn precisely of what it consisted. He folded it and thrust it into his pocket, muttering, quite amazedly:

"Half a million! Great Scott! the stake is, indeed, a big one. The girl's grandmother dead, leaving all of her property by will to Helena Beverly, eh? And the latter told me

she must have been dead for many years. She has not corresponded with her and cannot have known. Nor have known that she was possessed of so much wealth.

"It now is plain enough—as plain as twice two. No wonder, when the Maddocks learned of this, that the younger of the two wanted to marry her. That rat of a lawyer suspected something of the kind, and he opened the letter that had fallen into his hands. Then he answered it, presumably staving off a settlement, until he could coerce the girl into wedding his son.

"It's odds their next move will be to abduct her and put her out of the way," Nick coolly went on musing, not then aware that the crime already had been committed, or the first step in it. "They, then, would become the only heirs. A precious pair of rascals, indeed. I now will head them off and wind this business up in short order."

With the last, Nick pushed back his chair and started to rise.

It was the luckiest move he ever made, for it threw his head out of line with—a bullet.

Bang!

The report of the weapon rang like thunder through the house.

The bullet passed within an inch of Nick's head, and it came from a revolver in the hand of Tony Gargoni.

Coming up from the shore with Daly and Theresa, Gargoni had discovered Nick seated at Maddock's desk, coolly reading the discovered letter. Gargoni immediately crept nearer the open French window and fired the murderous shot.

Theresa darted around the house and into the back door, intending to warn the Maddocks.

Not knowing by how many he might be assailed, Nick made the first move that occurred to him. Like a flash, he dropped out of his chair and ducked for shelter behind a corner of the high desk, at the same time seizing his revolver.

Bang!

Gargoni saw that he had missed, and he fired again.

The bullet tore off a corner of the desk and bored a hole in the wall.

Nick thrust out his weapon and fired at random toward the window.

There was a crash of breaking glass, followed by a derisive roar.

"Gargoni!" thought Nick.

Another bullet sped by his head.

"I'll take a chance," he muttered coolly. "If I can sight the rascal, I can drop him."

Nick threw himself straight out on the floor and rolled quickly back of a table. He caught a glimpse of Gargoni's burly figure, and his revolver barked on the instant.

The bullet broke Gargoni's wrist, and the pain brought forth a roar like that of an infuriated lion. The ruffian lost all sense of fear and bounded into the room, intent only upon vengeance.

Nick leaped to his feet and met him halfway. A side step, one sweeping blow, dealt with the butt of his revolver—and Tony Gargoni lay stretched in one corner, with every muscle quivering, as senseless as if felled by a thunderbolt.

The heavy tread of hurrying feet already had reached Nick's ears, despite the attentions he had been paying Gargoni. He whipped out another revolver and whirled around—just as Caleb and Jack Maddock rushed into the room.

"Ah! you're just in time," cried Nick, covering both. "Hands up, or you'll get what I've just given that scoundrel."

"Thunder!" Jack Maddock roared, staggering. "It's Nick Carter himself!"

"Yes, and here's one of his assistants!" This from Patsy Garvan, as he bolted in through the window, revolver in hand.

"And here's still another! It's all off, you dogs, so cave at once or there'll be work here for an undertaker."

The last came from Chick Carter, as he rushed in from the adjoining hall, dragging Theresa Gargoni after him with her wrists in irons.

There was nothing to it, then, as Patsy afterward remarked. Within half a minute the Maddocks were securely handcuffed, and the only one who temporarily escaped was Daly, the chauffeur, who fled to the city with his car. He was arrested the following day, however, and within a month all of the culprits had been tried, convicted, and sentenced for their crimes.

The amazement of Lena Beverly, upon learning of the great fortune that had come to her from one supposed to have been dead for years, may be better imagined than described. Her joy was not greater, however, than her gratitude to Nick Carter, and in time, the detective was very generously rewarded for his kindly work.

Miss Beverly immediately retired from the stage, and a few months later Nick had the pleasure of witnessing her change her name to that of Dorrington.

THE END.

Nick Carter finds himself held captive in a particularly dangerous and novel manner. He gets word to Patsy and Chick by a most ingenious method. For the way in which he did it, and for a cracking good detective story, read "The Wind and the Wire; or, Nick Carter's Sky-line Message." The story will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 39, out June 7th.

HOW TO MAKE SKELETON LEAVES.

The leaves should be put into an earthen or glass vessel, and a large quantity of rain water poured over them. After this they must be left in the open air, and to the heat of the sun, without covering the vessel. As the water evaporates and the leaves become dry, more water must be added. The leaves will by this means putrefy, but the time required for this varies. Some plants will be finished in a month, others will require two months, or longer, according to the toughness of their parenchyma. When they have been in a state of putrefaction for some time, the two membranes will begin to separate, and the green part of the leaf to become fluid. Then the operation of clearing is to be performed. The leaf is to be put upon a flat, white earthen plate, and covered with clear water; and, being gently squeezed with the finger, the membranes will begin to open, and the green substance will come out at the edges. The membranes must be carefully taken off with the finger, and great caution must be used in separat-

ing them near the middle rib. When once there is an opening toward this separation, the whole membrane always follows easily. When both membranes are taken off, the skeleton is finished, and it has to be washed clean with water, and then dried between the leaves of a book.

Arrested at the Tomb;

Or, SHERIDAN KEENE ON A CURIOUS CASE.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Before taking up the case at hand, Amos K. Berkeley, president of the Federal Life Insurance Company, of Boston, explains to Sheridan Keene, the detective, that in the year 1903, the life of one Thomas Gaylord, of Worcester, Massachusetts, was insured for $5,000. That shortly afterward Gaylord died of consumption, and his wife collected the insurance. William Bennett had acted as the agent for the insurance company. Mr. Berkeley had suspected that there had been crooked work of some kind, but he had been unable to prove it.

Taking up the case in hand, Mr. Berkeley tells Keene that one Calvin Miller, of Bangor, Maine, was insured for $100,000, and that he had learned that the widow of Thomas Gaylord had become the wife of Miller. Also that Bennett, who had been discharged by the Federal Company, was living in Maine, and had been instrumental in insuring Miller in other companies.

Keene goes to Bangor, and, upon his arrival, learns that Calvin Miller has just been drowned while in the company of an employee, David Graff, whom Mrs. Miller had claimed as a cousin, and had persuaded her husband to employ.

CHAPTER IV.

SHERIDAN KEENE GETS DOWN TO WORK.

It was nearly noon when Keene left Barry's office, and he at once headed for the river, where the entire gang of mill hands, and all the outside help David Graff could secure, had been pressed into service in searching for Calvin Miller's dead body.

"This clever move may blind the local bright lights," said Keene to himself, as he approached the river bank, "but, fortunately, I have developed a faculty for seeing through a ladder. I think, Mr. David Graff, you and I must cross weapons. But I will hold off till after you have found Calvin Miller's body—or some other body!"

Keene now had no doubt that he had run upon as daring and crafty a scoundrel as is often found at large.

All of the data he had secured pointed not only to an attempt to defraud the insurance companies, but also to a most foul and dastardly murder.

The previous Gaylord case; the early appearance of Graff in this locality soon after Mrs. Gaylord's marriage to Miller; the alleged relation between the two, with an intimacy which finally had attracted public attention and roused Miller's jealousy; the fact that Graff alone had been Miller's companion at the time of the alleged accident, and that he only had witnessed it—in the judgment of Sheridan Keene, already suspicious, these closely related circumstances indicated with startling significance not only that Dave Graff and Mrs. Miller were a decidedly bad lot, but also that they were plotting desperately after a fortune, and to be permanently rid of Miller at the same time.

Sheridan Keene realized, however, that it was one thing to entertain these convictions, and quite another matter to be able to prove them to the satisfaction of a judge and jury.

"The evidence of their guilt! The irrefutable evidence of it, is what I now must secure!" he said to himself, concluding his review of the case as he neared the river bank. "But I yet will have it, Mr. Dave Graff, and you in the bargain!"

His glance over the stirring scene took in the work that was being done. A score of boats was scattered over the broad river, each manned by a crew with dragnets and grappling irons, engaged in a systematic dragging of the river.

Upon the shelving bank nearly a hundred interested spectators were gathered, and prominent among these Keene soon discovered the man he was seeking.

With a view to the design he now had in mind, the detective bound his handkerchief about his right hand, and presently inquired of one of the spectators:

"I suppose that man directing the work is Mr. Graff, isn't it?"

He had not particularly noticed the man he addressed; but when the fellow turned and faced him, his suspicious glance led Keene to observe him more closely.

He was quite a powerful man of about fifty years, with a swarthy complexion, unkempt hair, and a heavy black beard. He was roughly clad in a woolen shirt, a soiled dogskin jacket, and his pants were tucked into a pair of thick, cowhide boots.

Though the man's make-up would have passed muster with an ordinary observer, Sheridan Keene instantly detected that the man was disguised. Keene had learned, however, to make such discoveries without self-betrayal.

"I dunno," rejoined the fellow hoarsely. "You'll hev to ask some un else."

"Are you a stranger in these parts?"

The man frowned darkly, as if resenting the question, then growled through his heavy beard:

"Yes, I am! I am a logger, from up Canada way."

"I thought you perhaps knew Graff by sight."

"I don't know any one hereabouts, and don't want to, nuther!"

"Well, I want to know you, and I propose to, also," said Keene to himself, as he moved up the bank. "This mystery deepens, when a disguised man springs up at just this time like a mushroom in a night. I say, youngster, is that Dave Graff?"

"Yes, sir," cried the lad whom Keene had addressed. "Here, Mr. Graff! Here's a gentleman looking for you!"

Dave Graff turned up from the water's edge and ascended the slope of the bank. He was a well-built man of forty, with a rather attractive dark face and sharp, black eyes. He gave Keene a searching look as he approached him; but said, courteously enough:

"What do you want of me, sir?"

Keene handed him a card similar to that given Jim Barry.

"I am an Associated Press representative," he explained, "and my friend, Mr. Barry, up here, said you would doubtless give me the details of this sad affair. Mr. Miller having been a prominent man about here, we would like to properly notice this sad episode. I speak for the syndicate of papers I represent, sir."

Keene surmised that, if his suspicions were correct, Dave

Graff would instantly snap at an opportunity to give publicity to his version of the affair, and to laud his own conduct; and the detective had hit the nail on the head.

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Graff, quickly extending his hand. "Glad to know you, Mr. Green."

"Thanks," bowed Keene, smiling. "Pardon my left hand, sir. I wrenched the other when getting off the train, and it's quite lame. May I have a brief interview with you a little later?"

"Yes, surely! At your convenience, Mr. Green."

"Rather consult your own, Mr. Graff, for my time is less valuable than yours, when such sad duties devolve on you," replied Keene, with an artful display of solicitude. "I shall wire the interview for the morning editions in Boston and New York, and any early hour of the afternoon will answer."

"It is now noon," said Graff, consulting his watch. "The men will now knock off for dinner, and I, too, am going to lunch."

"Perhaps you can secure me a brief interview with Mrs. Miller, also," suggested Keene.

"The very thing!" exclaimed Graff. "I am to lunch informally with her, and you can accompany me. You will find her in deep bereavement, however, but I presume you will be able to stand that."

It was said, with a curious smile and a curious tone, and Keene responded dryly:

"Well, I will try to weather it."

Graff laughed, and took his arm.

'Come on, then," said he. "We will go up there at once. Awful thing, this, but I am in hopes we'll find the body."

Keene would have been willing to bet that he would ultimately fish up some body, and even that he then knew where it was located. He was sure that Dave Graff was not putting up for nothing this big bluff at a search after Miller's remains; but what his precise object was remained to be discovered.

"Yes, I hope you will," he rejoined. "The widow will feel so much better, knowing her poor husband is in the ground, rather than food for the fishes."

This seemed to tickle Dave Graf, for he chuckled deeply, and rejoined:

"Not much choice between the worms and fishes!"

"That's so," assented Keene. "I hadn't thought of that. Still, a hole in the ground seems much more natural and homelike. Is yonder the jam where the accident occurred?"

"Yes, it is. I can get you some blue prints of it, if you'd like to illustrate the story."

"Thanks, but I cannot transmit them in time. I will take the story just as you give it to me, and let it go at that."

"Good for you!" exclaimed Graff, with ill-concealed satisfaction. "I will give you the facts precisely."

Keene knew that he probably would give him quite the opposite of facts, and also that he was seizing upon this opportunity to bring his misrepresentations under the eyes of the insurance people in Boston. And the shrewd detective humored him to the limit of his leaning.

They arrived at the Miller residence a little after twelve. It was a stately wooden dwelling in a retired quarter of the town, with a large stable out back, and broad, well-kept grounds. All about the place were indications of affluence and refinement.

"This pair of reprobates are playing for a stake worth having, to say the least!" thought Keene, as he accompanied Graff up the broad driveway. "And with the hope of taking the last trick, that's plain! But wait till I open my side of the game!"

"Come right in, Mr. Green," said Graff, entering without ceremony. "Leave your hat and coat here, and take a seat in the reception room. I will inform Mrs. Miller of your presence."

The detective was not kept waiting long.

The bereaved widow presently put in an appearance, accompanied by Graff, and Keene took her measure at a glance.

Though dressed in black, and with a face now as long as her arm, she was a type distinctively dashing. She was about forty, with a striking figure, a strong face, and an abundance of yellow hair, which was in some disorder.

She received Keene with decorous gravity, however, and he again stated his mission.

"Directly after lunch," said Mrs. Miller. "I then will give you all the facts about my poor, dear husband. The table now is waiting, so you'll not be long detained."

After the luncheon was ended, which passed without incident, Keene made the play for which he had planned.

"I regret this accident to my hand, which is now quite stiff," he explained, after they had repaired to the library. "I am not sure that I can write legibly with my left, but I'll try."

"Nonsense, Mr. Green!" exclaimed Mrs. Miller. "There is no need of your writing it. Mr. Graff will note down the facts for you, I am sure."

"Of course I will!" exclaimed Graff, the project suiting him to the very letter. "I will write up the story for you precisely as it should appear. How will that do?"

"Nothing could please me better," replied Sheridan Keene, with an appreciation that was decidedly genuine, for this was precisely what he wanted.

It required half an hour, at the end of which time he and Graff left the house in company.

But Sheridan Keene now carried in his pocket not only Graff's own version of the accident, in black and white, but also an elegant specimen of Mr. Graff's handwriting.

To secure this had been his ultimate aim, moreover, that he might compare it with the signature of Thomas Gaylord on the five-thousand-dollar policy of seven years before.

"When'll this account of the accident go into the Boston papers, Mr. Green?"

"To-morrow morning, without doubt," said Keene readily.

"That's the stuff!" Graff exclaimed, with open satisfaction. "Do you leave town to-day?"

"No, not to-day," said Keene. "I shall wait until Miller's body is found, then I can send in further particulars."

Graff eyed him curiously for a moment, but could discover nothing back of the detective's innocent look. He saw, rather, an opportunity to further secure the publication of his own version of the events to follow; and he impulsively extended his hand.

"Good enough!" he exclaimed. "I think myself that the body will be found, and you'd better stay and get the precise facts. I will give them to you free, gratis."

"Thanks! I think so myself," said Keene heartily. "I will follow your advice."

"Good! Will I see you later?"

"No doubt of it!"

"Good day, then, till we meet again."

"Good-by!" nodded Keene. "Excuse my left."

"Don't mention it," laughed Graff; "it's nearest the heart."

"And when I give you my right, it will be nearest your neck," said Keene to himself, as they parted.

CHAPTER V.

KEENE VERIFIES HIS SUSPICIONS.

Besides being a clever detective and a shrewd physiognomist, Sheridan Keene was an expert graphologist.

He had mastered the science of comparative handwritings to its most minute details, and the most delicate and obscure characteristics of a person's chirography appealed to him with glowing distinctness, presenting features which the novice would be utterly unable to discover, and which the writer himself would be equally unable to disguise.

After leaving Graff to return to his work at the river, Keene hastened to the room he had secured at the hotel. Having locked himself in his chamber, and laid aside his outer garments, he procured a microscope from his portmanteau and began a comparison of the handwriting of David Graff with that alleged to have been that of Thomas Gaylord on the policy of seven years before.

The result of his study was precisely what Keene had anticipated. Despite the manifest attempt to forge Gaylord's signature in the policy, the peculiar characteristics of the forger's own hand stood out in bold relief to the eye of this clever student; and the identity of the criminal was as clearly established in the mind of Sheridan Keene as if he had been an eyewitness when the crime was committed.

It convinced the detective of three very important facts:

First, that Graff was the man who had forged the Gaylord policy.

Second, that Graff was the man who had impersonated Gaylord when Doctor Varney made for the Federal company a physical examination of the alleged applicant.

Third, that Graff and Nellie Gaylord had been engaged in criminal coöperation for at least seven years, and that this last horrible crime had, beyond any doubt, been mutually planned and perpetrated after years of deliberate and infamous designing.

At the end of an hour's study, Sheridan Keene arose and replaced the microscope in his portmanteau.

His features had grown hard and stern.

He was thinking of the knave from whom he lately had parted; and of the infamous woman who, perhaps at this villainous lover's instigation, had sacrificed two husbands to their greed for fortune.

And he was thinking, too, of the honorable man whose lifeless form might then be lying crushed out of shape and recognition under the jam of logs within a stone's throw of the great mill his own energy and industry had reared.

"Shocking! Appalling!" he muttered, as he resumed his coat and hat. "But their rope is nearing its end, and the hour of retribution is rapidly approaching. Thank God I now see the way of securing absolute proof of their guilt!"

He left the hotel and went out upon the street.

The excitement had increased.

People were hurrying from their homes, many women among them, and excitedly hastening in the direction of the river.

"What's up?" cried Keene, addressing a man who was running down the street.

The stranger turned back and shouted, over his shoulder:

"They've found it!"

"Found what?"

"Miller's body! They hauled it out from below the jam a half hour ago!"

And then the man rushed on his way, as if he felt he had lost something desirable by not having been on the spot a half hour earlier.

"So, so!" said Keene to himself. "Dave Graff has made another move in his desperate game. He shall have free line till after the funeral, and then, the round-up begins."

Keene followed the hurrying people, thinking he, perhaps, might add to his evidence by visiting the scene of the discovery; but, as he was about turning from the main street, he encountered Jim Barry, the coroner, who was hurrying up from the river with a bundle under his arm.

"Hello, Barry!" called Keene, venturing to detain him. "What have you got there?"

"Some o' Miller's clothes," replied the coroner, halting to respond.

"I hear his body has been discovered?"

"Yes; and durned if it ain't a queer thing! I'd 'a' swore they'd never have got it."

"So you said this morning."

"It's all out o' shape, though," cried Barry. "The head's gone completely, and one arm and a foot. Ground off by the logs."

"That's horrible!"

"Ain't it? Come up to my office along with me, and I'll give you all the facts. The press'll kind o' like to know 'em, I reckon."

"You're right, Mr. Barry; and you're very kind," said Keene, hurrying along with him.

"Waal, I sort o' tuk a fancy to yer, Mr. Green."

"Thanks!" exclaimed Keene. "And I rather like you, sir."

"Come on, then."

"Have you ordered the body removed, sir?"

"Yes, I tole Cy Dole to hev it taken up to the widder. 'Twan't no sense leaving it down on the river bank. It's a case of accident, fast enough, and reckin they'll hev to bury him by to-morrow."

"What garments have you brought up?"

"Just his two coats. They both are like Miller's, and so was the rest o' the suit; so there's no doubt o' the identity o' the body. Then there's some letters in these 'ere pockets, and they settle it for sure."

"Any objection to my looking at them, Mr. Barry?" asked Sheridan Keene, as they entered the coroner's office, and the latter laid his burden on the table and turned to dry his hands on a towel hung to the closet door.

"None at all," was the reply; "only don't lug off any of them."

"Oh, assuredly not!" said Keene quickly.

He then made a careful examination of the two garments. They appeared to be nearly new, and evidently had been purchased ready made. This fact struck Keene as being suspicious, since men of Miller's means usually have their clothes made to order: but the detective did not chance creating misgivings in Barry by asking ques-

tions relative to Miller's habit in that respect. A little later he learned from others, however, that Miller had been accustomed to buying his clothes ready made at an establishment in the city of Bangor.

In one of the pockets Keene found three letters, which he likewise examined. Two were addressed to Miller, relating to his business affairs, and bore the date of the previous day.

The third ostensibly was a letter written by Miller himself, and was addressed to a lawyer in Bangor. Superficially, it appeared that Miller had written the letter some hours before his death, and had put it in his pocket until he should visit the post office to mail it.

The letter was brief, and read as follows:

"Mr. R. M. Chase, Atty., Bangor, Me.

"DEAR SIR: When you can make it convenient to do so, I wish you would run up here for a few hours. Certain rumors reflecting upon my wife have made me very uncomfortable. In fact, I have been almost tempted to put myself out of misery. I wish to discuss the situation with you. Yours fraternally, CALVIN MILLER."

Keene smiled faintly when he read this brief but quite significant missive.

The moment Keene's eyes had fallen on the handwriting he had discovered a fact of which he previously had been tolerably convinced. Though the writing presumably was like that of Miller, it nevertheless presented the same obscure peculiarities which the detective had discovered in the Gaylord signature and in Graff's manuscript narrating the recent accident.

"Dave Graff's own hand!" Keene decided, still studying the wet sheet of paper.

This told the whole business.

It plainly indicated that the body was not that of Miller at all!

But whose body was it?

CHAPTER VI.

A BLUFF FOR POSITIVE PROOF.

On the evening of the day following the funeral from the Miller residence a man entered the broad gateway of the surrounding grounds and complacently approached the house.

He had the appearance of a tough sport, and walked like a man who knew his business. His suit was a flashy Scotch plaid, and he wore no overcoat. His hat was pitched well forward; his shoulders were carried with a hunch toward his ears; and he swung a heavy ironwood cane, with a bulldog's head for a handle.

Even his most intimate friends would not have recognized this swaggering young ruffian to be—Sheridan Keene.

It was the detective, nevertheless.

He wanted more direct proof against Graff and Nellie Miller than that based chiefly upon handwriting, and the circumstantial evidence thus far discovered; and he further wished to learn over whose body the funeral obsequies had recently been held.

Among the persons who had arrived in town late that afternoon, and registered at the hotel, was a man signing himself William Bennett, Bangor, evidently the insurance agent already suspected; and that he would be in consultation with Graff and Nellie Miller at the latter's house that evening Keene had not a doubt.

Hence he had made himself up in a way to preclude recognition, and now was prepared to begin aggressive operations.

It was after dark when he approached the dwelling, but the light of the stars made objects dimly discernible. Yet he failed to observe a dark figure crouching outside under one of the library windows—that of a stout, bearded ruffian, clad in a soiled dog-skin jacket.

Without pausing, Keen ascended the steps and gave the doorbell a jerk that threatened its wire. The noisy summons had not ceased ringing through the house, when Graff himself appeared on the threshold, and fixed a sharp, resentful look upon the face of the visitor.

"Who are you?" he demanded bluntly. "And why did you pull our bell like that?"

"Like what?" retorted Keene. "I wanted you to know that I was here. What d'ye suppose I pulled it for? You'll be glad to see me, too, Mr. Graff, when you know my business."

Dave Graff started involuntarily, and his frown became a look of mingled curiosity and distrust.

"I am engaged now," he said curtly.

"You'd better see me just the same."

"Why had I?"

"'Cause you can't lose anything by seeing a guy who knows what I know, and is having all he can do to hold it."

"What's the nature of your business?" demanded Graff suspiciously.

Keene leaned forward and whispered, with the manner of one giving friendly warning.

"It's about the little game you're pulling off."

"What little game?"

"Oh, you know well enough!" growled the detective. "There's a party on to you, Dave, and I am on to the party. You'd better interview me, now—see!"

Graff had turned quite pale, yet he succeeded in commanding himself.

Keene realized that he had his man, but he was resolved to have absolute proof, and to solve the entire mystery.

"Come in here!" Graff now commanded. "What's your name, and where do you come from?"

"My name's Bill Kelly, and I——"

"What's the matter, David?" interrupted the voice of Mrs. Miller, from the direction of the dining room. "Who is there?"

The tone of her voice was sharpened by mingled distrust and apprehension, yet its firmness told Sheridan Keene that she would be a woman of vicious desperation if occasion required.

"Come out this way!" Graff sternly commanded, leading Keene through the hall and into the dining room. "Do you know this fellow, Nell?"

TO BE CONTINUED.

FADED PHOTOGRAPHS RESTORED.

Faded photographs are restored to their original tone by immersing the yellowed prints in a dilute solution of bichloride of mercury until all the yellowness disappears. Then they are well washed in water to remove the mercurial salt. None but experts should attempt such restoration. If the print is a mounted one, it is not necessary to unmount it before treating with the solution. All that is

required in such a case is to keep it in intimate contact for a time with blotting paper, soaked in the bichloride solution. No detail of the picture is lost during this restoring process; the sickly yellow only is removed, and the picture rendered bright and clear. In addition to such improvement, the pictures thus operated upon always possess a much warmer tone than they did originally, as the purple or black tones give way to reddish brown or reddish purple, more or less bright according, probably, as gold or silver has been the principal toning agent. Photographs subjected to the bichloride treatment appear to be permanent, at least so say those who have made the experiment.

BIG PRICES PAID FOR LITTLE THINGS.

Perhaps the highest price ever given for a pin was one dollar, recently paid by a young dude at a charitable bazaar. He had been prevailed upon by a little charmer to invest in a buttonhole bouquet marked up at fifty cents, in payment for which he tendered a two-dollar bill.

"Will you pin it in?" he asked the dainty maid—who, by the way, was attired in a neat Swiss costume.

"Certainly," she smilingly replied, taking a pin from her breast and fixing the flower.

"What are my services worth, sir?" said the fascinating little minx. "If you only knew how nice it looked, you would not begrudge another fifty cents."

The gentleman smiled a sickly smile.

"And the other dollar?" he tremblingly queried.

"Oh," was the reply, "that's for the pin."

Curious and momentary fancies will sometimes lead a person to offer ridiculous amounts for articles of seemingly little value. A man will see a thing which tickles his fancy, he will offer a price, and if it is denied to him he will go to absurd limits to humor his whim. It is another instance of "He won't be happy till he gets it!" He has an insatiable longing to possess it, and possess it he will if he is stubborn enough to persevere, and his purse is deep enough to back him up.

A curious instance of this came under our notice recently.

A gentleman took a fancy to a piece of bric-a-brac which caught his attention at a house where he was visiting. He told his host bluntly that he liked it, and would pay anything for it. It was only a small china ornament, but the possessor would not part with it, and endeavored to laugh his friend out of his fancy. The visitor went away disappointed, and, on calling a few days later, was still more disappointed to learn that the article had been accidentally broken and thrown away. He asked for the bits, but these could not be forthcoming, owing to the clearance of the dustbin the day previously. Nothing daunted, the "fancier"—a rather apropos title for him in this instance—sought out the housekeeper, offered a reward for the bits, and ultimately obtained them at a price ridiculously in excess of the original value of the unbroken article.

But, turning from the humorous, there are many instances on record of a pathetic nature. The field of battle has furnished most of these, as, indeed, it well might, for no theme has given more subject to painter, poet, and novelist than the terrible scenes of carnage, suffering, and devastation of a battlefield.

In the Indian mutiny, an English resident at Delhi, who had been shot, held toward a sepoy who was passing his well-lined purse for a drink from his flask. The sepoy took the purse and gave the water, but while the wounded man was raising it to his lips, the arm of the treacherous sepoy was raised, and ere the unfortunate Englishman could utter a word, a dagger lay buried in his quivering flesh. He was dead, and the asked-for relief was clasped in his nerveless hand. But the assassin was not to escape. A wounded soldier, who lay near, turned in time to see the blow struck, and the blood kindled in his veins at the barbaric cruelty. Severely wounded as he was, he managed to raise himself, seize his revolver, and fire. As he fell back exhausted by the effort, he saw the Indian roll over, and knew he had meted out justice to a cowardly villain.

Years ago, when such a rush was being made to the gold diggings, a man who had "struck oil" was riding from the claims to the nearest town to deposit his "chips," when he was thrown from his horse in the center of a prairie and seriously hurt. He lay for hours unconscious. When he came to it was night, and no sign of habitation; no human being could be seen as he cast his eyes round the dreary waste. All through the night he lay parched with thirst and racked with terrible pain. As morning dawned he felt all the agonies of the last struggle of departing life, and he looked despairingly about him. At that moment he saw a horseman approaching, who in a few moments came up to him.

"All in this bag for a draft of water," was the appeal that met his ears.

"Mate," he replied, "never mind about the bag, drink." The other did drink, he drank ravenously, and the succorer, who happened to be a new arrival from the old country, stood by the wounded fellow and did his best for him until he was able to proceed by slow stages. On the other's recovery he was compelled to accept half of his "chips"—some hundreds in value; and shortly after the two returned to the claims together, ultimately selling after they had accumulated a fortune.

Who has not heard of the comparatively fabulous sums given for old, used postage stamps—mere pieces of paper, in most people's eyes. Yet a single one has fetched as much as $1,250 from a collector who needed it to help complete his "wants."

Again, miniature paintings have fetched their thousands of dollars, while the price of diamonds is too well known to need repetition here. The few subjects which we have touched upon, however, will go far toward proving that it is not by any means the biggest articles which fetch the biggest sums, but in most cases the smallest.

PECULIARITIES OF THE GYPSIES.

The gypsies have a singular way of marking their path as they go through the woods, just as did their ancestors from time immemorial. It is by the "patteran," as they call it. It was illustrated to me in this way by a gypsy. He took three weeds with feather tails, and laid them in line, saying:

"You never see three such weeds lie in that direction unless put so by gypsies. We put some light clods over them to hold them down (most ways they are mullen stalks), and so keep the road and join our folks this way."

We find three clans recorded by those who are interested in tracing the history of the gypsies on our continent. The king's clan, the Stanleys, a clan of direct kin of them, the

Bryers, and a clan distantly related, the Coopers. They are scattered far and wide, principally through the Western country and in Canada. Their children are often named for the locality where they are born, as Missouri, New Orleans, Alleghany.

"These gypsies came from England in 1856, and soon after selected Dayton, Ohio, as their headquarters in the summer months, where it became the center for the gypsy race on this continent. They speak several dialects besides their own Romany."

This strange people know nothing of their own history or origin. Said one of the Stanley family recently:

"I will give a good team to the man who first tells me what a gypsy is, and where they came from. I don't know."

This is not remarkable, although they are as separate a race as are the Jews, since it is only with great difficulty that their descent can be traced by the scholar. It is admitted to be of great antiquity, and it is only by the careful study of their language that learned men have been able to come to any conclusion concerning their origin. The gypsies of the Old World proved themselves so dangerous and mischievous to the communities among whom they came that they were treated with great severity. Proscribed, banished, and even hunted like wild beasts, they were truly a race "more outcast and despised than Moor or Jew."

It is said, on the other hand, that those living in this country, near the home of their king, Levi Stanley, are regarded as good neighbors. They own and carefully cultivate large tracts of land and raise much valuable live stock, especially horses. True to their love of travel, they nearly all roam through the South in winter, but it is upon their lawful business of trading. It is affirmed that nothing of the nature of violence or theft has been recorded against them for the past twenty years.

It is believed that the gypsies were expelled from Sinde by the victories of Mahmoud in 1025, and traveled slowly eastward, entering Europe some time in the thirteenth century. During the last century, great interest has been manifested in their improvement and welfare, and the efforts made to educate them in habits of Christian morality and continuous industry have met with good success. In their worst days they still preserved some traits of dignity and nobility, and we can never forget that it is to one of this race that we owe one book which has touched so many hearts, and has shown to so many the way to the Celestial City—the "Pilgrim's Progress" of John Bunyan.

Preserving its own language, the gypsy race has maintained its separate existence in the midst of the language of every people among whom these wandering tribes have tarried. It has defied proscription and survived adulteration.

HOW VARIOUS NATIONS SLEEP.

In the tropics men sleep in hammocks or upon mats of grass. The East Indian unrolls his portable charpoy or mattress, which in the morning is again rolled together and carried away by him. The Japanese lie upon matting with a stiff, uncomfortable wooden neck rest. The Chinese use low bedsteads, often elaborately carved, and supporting only mats or coverlids. A peculiarity of the German bed is its shortness; besides that it frequently consists in part of a large down pillow or upper mattress, which spreads over the person, and usually answers the purpose of all the other ordinary bed clothing combined. In England the old four-poster bedstead is still the pride of the nation, but the iron or brass bedstead is fast becoming universal. The English beds are the largest in the world. The ancient Greeks and Romans had their beds supported on frames, but not flat like ours. The Egyptians had a couch of a peculiar shape, more like an old-fashioned easy-chair with hollow back and seat.

ARE TALENTS DERIVED FROM THE FATHER OR THE MOTHER?

It is certainly a popular belief that talents are inherited from the mother, but this is a question that must always remain an open one. The facts of heredity show that, as a rule, the male takes the peculiarities of the father, and the female those of the mother. A noted writer, however, is of the opinion that the qualities of each individual are due to the combined influence of both parents, and that the remarkable qualities of the one may have been neutralized in the offspring by the opposite or defective qualities of the other. Much is due to natural abilities, to the force of example, to education, and to a man's power of application. In face of this, it is difficult to say whether talents are derived from father or mother, but it is certain that the latter has the larger influence in molding character, as an educator, to inspire ambition, and to kindle the loftiest and most generous impulses.

RECIPE FOR WHITENING THE TEETH.

Dissolve two ounces of borax in three pints of water. Before quite cold, add thereto one teaspoonful of tincture of myrrh, and one tablespoonful of spirit of camphor. Bottle the mixture for use. One wineglassful of the solution, added to half a pint of tepid water, is sufficient for each application. This solution, applied daily, preserves and beautifies the teeth. Always take the precaution to wash out the mouth with water after every meal, especially if animal food has been eaten. By these means the particles of food lodging about the teeth and gums are dislodged, which, when allowed to remain and accumulate, prove excessively injurious.

GREATEST RAINFALL IN THE WORLD

The greatest rainfall in the world occurs at Cherrapungi, on the Khasi Hills, in Bengal. The average annual fall here is about 610 inches, or nearly 51 feet, while in 1861 it is reported that the fall was 805 inches. In the month of August, 1841, 264 inches fell there, and during five successive days thirty inches fell in every twenty-four hours. The meaning of these figures may be realized when it is remembered that the average rainfall of the British Isles is but thirty-six inches, and that an inch of rain means a weight of 100 tons per acre; so that every year more than 60,000 tons of water fall on each acre of land in Cherrapungi. The cause of this enormous rainfall is that when the monsoon changes, and the warm and moist southwest wind is blowing northeastward toward Central Asia it is suddenly raised some 6,000 feet by the Khasi Hills. The temperature is thereby reduced below the point of saturation, and the superabundant moisture is precipitated in these unequaled deluges of rain.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Swiss Marksmen Use 30,000,000 Cartridges.

Rifle shooting is to the Swiss people what baseball is to Americans, their national sport. The Swiss are the crack rifle shots of Europe, and if there is any truth in the old adage that practice makes perfect, they ought to be, for last year they expended 30,000,000 ball cartridges on private rifle ranges. This is quite aside from the practice conducted by the government in connection with the army maneuvers.

The growing popularity of rifle shooting by the citizens of Switzerland is shown by the fact that ten years ago only 14,000,000 cartridges were expended for perfection in this art. To-day there is not a Swiss boy over sixteen years old who cannot handle a military rifle with accuracy, and many women also are good shots. During the last ten years the Swiss teams have been victorious in every international contest they ever entered, and much interest attaches here to the showing they will make in the coming international rifle shooting competition in the United States.

It is the ambition of nearly every Swiss to become a first-class shot, and he will cheerfully spend his money for cartridges to attain his object. The national love for shooting is encouraged and helped in every way by the military authorities.

Horse Kills Boy Tormentor.

Revenge, swift and sudden, was dealt out by a horse to seven-year-old Michael Good, at New Britain, Conn.

Several boys were throwing stones at the horse. When Good approached to pick up some of the stones to throw again, one of his companions hit the animal. The horse kicked with both feet and struck the boy, breaking his neck. The boy died instantly.

Opens "Loaded" Safe.

"There, gentlemen, is your safe opened. Now I will give my clothes a chemical bath and get the nitroglycerin out of them," said C. W. Crouch to a crowd at Council Hill, Okla. The people stood on a dead line one hundred yards from where Crouch had been working on a safe in the post office which robbers had failed to open. As he walked by with enough of the explosive soaked in his clothes to blow him to pieces, they watched with amazement.

Robbers had "souped" up the safe to crack it. Before they could touch off the explosive they had been frightened away. Also they had left the safe in such a condition that no one dared to go into the building after it was found the explosive was still in the cracks around the safe door ready to be exploded.

Crouch is a gunsmith and locksmith. He is an expert on opening safes, and has never yet found one that he cannot open with ease, and he has opened many of them when others failed. So he was sent for to open the "loaded" safe at Council Hill. It was no new job for him. He had opened other safes with enough nitroglycerin in them to blow them to pieces.

He spread a rug on the floor and under the safe. Then carefully he drilled holes in the soap which had been used to stop up the cracks around the safe door to hold the nitroglycerin and let the explosive run out on the rug. Much of it got soaked up in his clothing. With his ear pressed close against the door he gave the knob on the safe door a gentle twirl, repeated it, arose, and swung the door open. A sigh of relief went up from the watching crowd.

There was enough of the explosive still sticking to the sides of the safe door to have caused an explosion. That was removed by Crouch by the application of a chemical. He also soaked his clothes and the rug he used in the same solution.

Chance Picks New York Team.

Frank Chance, former manager of the Chicago Cubs, now the leader of the New York American League team, published an article recently. As the highest-priced ball manager in the world, being paid $25,000 per year, what Chance has to say is of interest to fans all over the country.

In his article, Chance picks the finish of the National League for 1913 with these teams in the following order: New York, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, St. Louis, and Boston last.

Among the other things, Chance comes out with the statement that Brown, the "three-fingered" star of the old Cub team, when Chance was manager, was a greater pitcher than Mathewson. To quote his own words:

"In all my experience in baseball I never saw but one better pitcher than Matty, and this was 'Three-fingered' Brown. He was a fine fielder, great hitter, and had all kinds of curves. He never threw one game away by wildness. And, although he has been pitching ball for eleven years, I never heard him once complain of a sore arm. I think he was a better pitcher than Mathewson."

While Chance is unwilling to promise any pennants for the New York Highlanders this year, he does assure his friends that his new team will put up a worthy fight at all stages of the season. Chance knows that it takes time to build up a winning team. But Chance has won so many championships in the National League that no one doubts his ability to soon be surpassing that success in the American League.

Boy Scouts as Road Builders.

The Boy Scouts of Hood River, Ore., will become practical road builders this summer. Their scout master, the Reverend E. A. Harris, asked the coöperation of the city council in an effort to beautify Eliot Park, which lies in the Indian Creek Cañon, south of the city, but which has been inaccessible because of lack of roads leading to it. The proposal has been accepted by the council, which instructed the park committee and city engineer to assist in every way possible.

Judge Bars Candy on Sunday.

Police Magistrate Byers, who recently ruled that selling a five-cent collar button after hours is not a violation of the early-closing law in Edmonton, Canada, has decided that the sale of candy on Sunday is an infraction of the

Lord's Day act. Counsel for three merchant defendants argued at a hearing that candy is as much a food as ham and eggs. Dealers have been arrested and fined in the past for selling ice cream and candies on Sundays, the inspectors of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police declining to admit them in the category of foods and necessities.

Pick Red Sox and Giants for Flags.

Baseball "dope" is becoming plentiful, with the opening of the league seasons, and the pennant winners have already been "selected." In the opinion of the dopesters the New York Giants will again capture the National League pennant and the Boston Red Sox are picked to win the American League race, just as they did last year.

"Dope" at this time of the year cannot be relied upon to any great extent, of course. Those who expect the Boston team to repeat say that they base their guess on the fact that the old players are in fine shape, and are able to provide a better brand of baseball than they did last year.

The New York Giants appear to be fully as good as they were at the start of last season, if not better.

The Philadelphia Athletics are rated right under Boston in the American League, and the Pittsburgh Pirates are being given second place in the National League. The Cincinnati Reds, however, may make a better showing than the Athletics, according to those who have been following the Reds.

Most baseball players, blessed with names referring to the great national game, have succeeded in living up to their names. For instance, Fielder Jones is conceded to have been some fielder, while Neal Ball knew what to do when the bases were filled with none out and he caught a line drive. Even Harry Fanwell, once a Cleveland pitcher, believed in living up to his name. He turned the trick gracefully, and carried off the booby batting average in the league one season.

Frank Chance is always willing to take one, while Leon Ames, of the Giants, is noted for his control. Ralph Works, late of the Tigers, had one fault. At least Hughey Jennings always said: "He works too hard."

There have been several players named Rapp and Rapps but not one of them was a slugger, while Pitcher Hitt was anything but a hitter.

"Cy" Young, the veteran baseball pitcher, who retired from the Boston Nationals last year with a record for longer service than any other man who ever played in the big leagues, received messages of congratulations from some of his former teammates the other day on the occasion of his forty-sixth birthday. Since his retirement, Young has lived on his farm near Paoli, Ohio. The farm is one of the finest in Ohio, and was bought with his earnings as a ball player. Though the "old man" has no apparent intention or desire to resume his career on the diamond, he continues to take a very keen interest in the game, and never fails to read the baseball news.

Big Hands Help in Diamond Success.

It was the feminine size of hands which kept Cy Seymour from being a great pitcher. When he first joined the New York Giants, many years ago, he came as a twirler, but he found the greatest difficulty in securing control of the ball, because his hands were so small that he could not get his fingers all the way around the sphere.

Cy was finally forced to give up pitching entirely and go to the outfield, where his hitting rather than his fielding kept him in the game for a long period of years.

Vincent Campbell, the fast center fielder of the Bostons, had the same handicap as Seymour in regard to the size of his hands.

Campbell's mitts are far below the average in length and diameter, and the muffed flies which he is guilty of are the result of this physical handicap, to a great extent. He is also not so good a thrower as he would be if his hands were a bit more bulky.

Campbell, however, played better ball last season than ever before, and President Gaffney, of the Boston Club, believes that he is going to be a very valuable man for his club this season.

Vincent is a speed marvel, no one excelling him in getting down to first base. But he has two weak points in offensive work. He is a very poor waiter, and so does not get on nearly so often as he would if he were able to force the pitcher to pitch to him.

His great speed makes him a hard man to stop on the bases, but he is not on there so much as he would be if he could develop the habit of waiting to better advantage.

Campbell hits sixteen points higher than Bescher, but the extra bases on balls secured by the Redleg were more valuable than the extra hits made by the Boston gardener.

Owing to his inability to wait, Campbell went to bat more times officially than any other player in the National League last year.

He was charged with 624 times at bat, and no other player reached the 600 mark, though sixteen of them played in as many or more games than he did. This is a serious weakness in a lead-off man, who should be on base more often by the pass route. Campbell, in spite of his great speed, is not a very clever base runner.

While Bescher was stealing sixty-seven bases last year, Vincent was copping just nineteen, both men playing in exactly the same number of games.

If George Stallings can show Campbell a few things about waiting them out at the plate and running bases smoothly after he gets on, Vincent will be a real power for him, for he is a good hitter and a very fast man, though not yet instructed in how to use his speed to the greatest advantage.

Hit by a Tree, Loses Voice.

Will Heffner, of Coin, Iowa, is speechless as a result of having been struck by a falling tree. Heffner was dumb when found beneath the tree and has remained in that condition, in spite of doctors' efforts to relieve the nerves which were affected by the injury.

Immigrants Crowd into United States.

The annual tide of immigration at New York is again approaching the flood mark reached in years preceding the financial panic of 1907, according to figures contained in a quarterly report issued by Health Officer Joseph J. O'Connell. There were 342,763 persons of all classes inspected at Ellis Island during the first three months of this year. This is an increase of nearly 52,000 over the corresponding period of 1912.

Singer Weds Crow Indian.

Miss Frances M. Rinehart, beautiful and accomplished daughter of the late Doctor J. H. Rinehart, army surgeon and a leading physician of Montana, has become the bride of J. W. Cornwell, a full-blooded Crow Indian, and will,

after the honeymoon, make her home on the Crow Reservation in Montana. Miss Rinehart is a singer of note, and for a time was with a Western opera company. She met Cornwell while on a visit to her former home in Montana, where Cornwell operates a store on the reservation.

Puts Snake in Stove Without Knowing It.

Mrs. David Gresh, who is over 70 years old, built a fire in the kitchen range at her home, at Pottstown, Pa., preparatory to baking. When the fire was well kindled the aged woman tossed on a larger piece of wood, and as she picked up a small, hollow piece, she did not suspect that it contained anything.

Results came soon. There was a creaky noise in the fire box, unlike the crackling of burning wood. Mrs. Gresh removed one of the top plates of the stove, and saw a blacksnake wriggling its head out of the hole, but too weak to jump from the fire. Before she could remove it from the stove the snake died.

Blind Preacher Trims a Quarter-mile Hedge.

The latest remarkable task to be performed by Elder D. M. Spencer, the blind preacher, of Gentry, Mo., is the trimming of a hedge on his farm. Spencer cut and trimmed the hedge, a quarter of a mile in length, and piled and burned the brush.

Hedge trimming is considered difficult work for those who can see well.

All Students Must Learn to Swim.

Before completing the first year's course at the University of California all male students will hereafter be required to learn how to swim, and they have been provided with an open-air swimming pool.

In the eastern part of the university grounds, in a sheltered spot in Strawberry Cañon the pool has been constructed. It is supplied by a stream which passes through a filtered bed, is built of reënforced concrete, and holds a half million gallons of water. This novel feature at the university cost $17,000 paid out of the surplus in the semi-annual gymnasium fees. In favorable weather the pool is used by hundreds of students daily.

Innocent Man Free After Fifteen Years.

After the man had served fifteen years for a murder he did not commit, Governor McGovern has granted a conditional pardon to William M. Fuller, sentenced from Dane County, Wis., in 1898, to serve a life term in Waupun for the murder of an aged couple at Black Earth.

William Bestor, who received the same sentence, was the instigator of the deed and the actual murderer, it now appears. Before Bestor died he made an affidavit that Fuller had no part in the murder.

Fuller's father and mother are in the Soldiers' Home in Waupaca, and it is one of the conditions of his pardon that he support them.

Trades a Finger for a New Nose.

A young woman whose name is being withheld by the Kansas City hospital authorities, has traded the ring finger of her right hand for a nose. The final work of the unusual operation, known to surgeons as rhinoplasty, formed a clinic for the visiting surgeons of the Medical Society of the Missouri Valley.

Several weeks ago the young woman, who is a ward of the Reverend Horace W. Cole, was taken to the hospital. The outward structure of her nose was lost when she was 5 years old, because of catarrh. She is 21. Doctor Edward G. Blair undertook to supply a nose. She was willing to undergo any sacrifice and by her cheerfulness in the hospital became known as Miss Sunshine.

The first step was to begin to mold the finger into the shape of a nose and this had to be done while the finger was attached to the hand to give it life. The flesh was split on the inside to the second joint and bound to a strip of celluloid and the cut was lined with flesh taken from the chest wall of the young woman. The flesh was then fashioned to form the nostrils. Then the nail was removed. Even at this stage the finger began to take on the shape of a nose.

Then another part of making the new nose began. The finger, still attached to the hand, was placed in the position of the nose and held in a plaster cast. For three or four days the patient suffered considerable inconvenience. Then she grew accustomed to the strained position of her arm, and was able to read books and talk with her friends.

A week after the cast was put on she reported to Doctor Blair.

"Why, my finger feels just like it was my nose down this far," indicating the second joint, "and after that it feels like a finger."

"I knew by her answer," said Doctor Blair, "that the blood circulation from the face to the finger had started. The nerves were knitting and adjusting and that is why a part of her finger felt like her nose."

The nineteenth day after the finger was bound to the face the operation was completed by amputating the finger at its base, leaving the former finger a nose with the blood flowing from the face through it. The nose will be given its final shaping while the young woman is in the convalescent ward.

The bone and flesh of the finger up to the second joint will form the ridge of the nose. The second joint will be the tip of the nose. The remainder of the bone will form the support between the nostrils.

No scar will be visible on the face, Doctor Blair believes. "The scar falls into the fold of the skin and disappears," he said.

There is even a chance, it is said, that the young woman will retain her sense of smell.

Can Tell a Scout.

Lieutenant General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the scout movement, says he can tell a Boy Scout at once whenever he sees him, even if the boy is out of uniform. "The scout," he says, "does not slink by me on the road, pretending not to see me, like the ordinary shy boy, but he looks at me like a man and gives a salute or a 'Good morning,' and walks past like a grenadier. And if I speak to him he doesn't hang his head and murmur something I can't hear; he holds his head up and speaks out, and says what he means. That is what I like about a scout—and so do many other people."

Woman Slaughters Wolves at Night.

If there were more women like Mrs. Sarah Blake, of Saskatchewan, Canada, homesteaders would be less troubled by wolves.

Mrs. Blake is a widow, living three miles east of Pelly. Wolves became so bold recently that they invaded her

sheep pen and killed a number of valuable lambs. One of the widow's horses had died and she had the body removed to a field back of the stable, and distributed pieces of poisoned meat about it, but the wily wolves were not tempted. Mrs. Blake is a good shot, but when she sought to shoot the wolves they kept out of range. The wolves were attracted by the meat which was not poisoned and gathered at night back of the stable, making the night hideous with their howls.

Mrs. Blake was awakened about 2 o'clock one morning by the howling and fighting of the wolves. In the moonlight the widow could see the wolves clearly. She donned two suits of white underclothes, two pairs of white woolen socks, a white sweater, and a white toque. Then she covered her repeating shotgun with a sheet and quietly left the house. Clad in white, she could not be seen in the snow, and she made little noise as she walked. She crept behind the stable unnoticed by the wolves, but saw the range was still too great. Dragging her gun, she rolled over and over in the snow until she thought she was near enough to the wolves to make every shot count.

Slipping the sheet off the gun, Mrs. Blake took careful aim at one of the wolves. She saw him fall, and pulled the trigger again and again. The wolves were confused and ran in her direction being unable to tell from which quarter the shots were coming. When the gun was empty there were seven dead wolves to repay the widow for her early morning exertion. She sold the pelts for $42.

Cyclones and Tornadoes.

Not one, but several tornadoes, all offshoots of the same cyclone, however, caused the great loss of life and property in Omaha, Terre Haute, Council Bluffs, and other places, according to Professor Frederick W. Sardeson, of the geology department of the University of Minnesota. Professor Sardeson could not remember a cyclone worse than that which struck Omaha.

"The whirling of a cyclone causes two, three, four, or even more offshoots or eddies known as tornadoes," said Sardeson. "One cyclone alone, without these tornadoes, could not have done all the damage done in Omaha, in my opinion.

"The recent storm reminds me of a tornado that struck Mineral Point, Wis., nearly thirty years ago, when almost as much damage was done. I was at Spring Valley, Minn., twenty years ago when that great storm nearly wiped out Grand Meadow. I saw three distinct tornadoes at that time, whirling masses, but only one of them touched the ground, and it was this one that struck the town of Grand Meadows."

Professor Sardeson said that the destruction at Terre Haute, Ind., was probably caused by a tornado given off by the Omaha cyclone when it struck the city or some rough ground.

Words Most Used.

Not long ago a competent man made a study of 2,000 personal and business letters which he classed under twelve heads. His object was to discover the words in most common use. To shorten the labor he set down the first words of each line; that is, 23,269 of about 110,165 words. It is believed that had he studied all the words the results would have been the same. There were but 2,001 separate words among these 23,269, and 751 were used only once. On the other hand, "I" was used 1,080 times and 43 words accounted for half of the 24,000. Words occurring more than 300 times were: "I," "the," "and," "to," "your," "of," "for," "in," "dear," "a," in descending order.

Words occurring less than 300 times were: "Will," "my," "with," "we," "as," "very," "have," "that," "me," "it," "please," "send," "this," "truly," "if," "on," "be," "is," "which," "sincerely," "at," "not," "sir," "would," "thank," "from," "but," "once," "are," "by," "one," "inclose."

These forty-three words are of Saxon origin, with few exceptions.

The first and most obvious conclusion is that spelling books should give a thorough drill of these forty-three words, and it would do no harm to expand the list to the 100 words in most frequent use. But when it is further urged that it is useless to try to teach the spelling of 10,000 or more words found in the spellers, one may be allowed to differ.

Spelling should be one of the means of expanding knowledge both of words and things, and it is doubtless true that the narrowness of the correspondence vocabulary betrays limitation of culture which education should try to overcome.

Imperial Aerial Fleet Proposed.

A well-known Canadian, now living in London, has been asked to go to Canada to try to raise half a million dollars for an imperial aërial fleet. He has declined to undertake the mission until the promoters have some more prominent and substantial names at the back of the enterprise.

The proposal that the Mother Country and the Dominions should unite in establishing an air service has been canvassed for some time in influential circles, but no references have so far appeared in the newspapers.

The promoters are now endeavoring to get official backing from the government.

Morgan, Greatest Financier, Dies.

J. Pierpont Morgan, the most powerful individual money power in the world, who controlled about $10,000,000,000, is dead. His death at the Grand Hotel, Rome, Italy, was caused by a complete collapse, brought on by an attack of acute indigestion in Egypt. His nervous condition was shattered, and he suffered extreme weakness from his inability to take nourishment naturally, owing to the muscles of the throat being paralyzed. During the last eighteen hours of his life he was in a comatose state most of the time, and did not recognize members of his family who were at the bedside. He was kept alive with drugs and by injections of food.

The death of J. P. Morgan had almost no effect on the New York stock market. There was no panic and hardly a flurry during the entire session. His death had been expected and discounted.

For years J. P. Morgan dominated America's finances. Standing out in the memories of all Americans to-day are many incidents in the Morgan career, but chief is the way his gruff declaration, "This country's affairs are sound," ended the financial panic of the Roosevelt administration in 1907.

After normal conditions had been restored, he sent for his son, J. P. Morgan, junior, and began transferring the burden of his affairs to the younger shoulders. And it was not the imperious emperor of former years that with-

stood the grilling before the Money Trust inquisitors in Washington last winter, but a very old man.

There were other men who made more money, and whose operations rank with his in the brilliancy of performance, but Morgan was always unique in that he always worked on the constructive side of business and made more money for other people than he did for himself.

Money making to him was only an incident of business. He delighted in great productive enterprises just as an artist delights in a great canvas. When he looked at the stock market he did not see figures. The ticker tape was to him a panorama of rushing trains and steamships and roaring factories.

His great success naturally invited attacks, but he never became bitter under these attacks, recognizing them as natural manifestations of popular sentiment. The result is that even those who were not enrolled in his financial army had kindly feelings for the gruff giant, before whose blows they had to occasionally lower their banners. If Morgan had cared for great riches he might have been the richest man in the world.

J. P. Morgan, junior, only son of the financier, will succeed to the management of the Morgan interests. The title, J. P. Morgan & Co., will be retained.

The son is by no means a novice at directing financial enterprise, nor is he so young as to cause any anxiety as to possible rashness. Morgan, junior, is 46 years old. He is a large man physically and mentally. He weighs 200 pounds, and is an athlete. And, what is probably most essential, he has had his father's careful training.

Already the future head of the greatest financial interests controlled by an American firm is director in many corporations. When H. H. Rogers died in 1909, the younger Morgan was elected his successor in the United States Steel Corporation.

International World Series Question of but a Few Years.

That baseball, the American national game, is fast coming into worldwide fame, is evident from the number of baseball leagues that are now being organized in foreign countries. France, Sweden, and the little Japan are taking to the game like ducks to water, and it is only a question of a few years before there will be an international world's series. These nations are already endeavoring to organize leagues, and France has imported several American coaches to teach them the game.

Editorial comment in the *Spalding Guide* for the season of 1913, calls attention to the fact that the Chinese are grasping the theory of the game as played in this country, and are making rapid strides to perfect themselves in the game along American lines. The game of ball has been played in China ever since the days of early Chinese history, but never in the systematic manner that has been adopted since the American game was first made known in the Orient. There is a league in Hongkong, and ball teams in Shanghai and other cities.

Junior Government in Every City.

The formation in every city of the land of a junior municipal government patterned after the regular city government, in which every boy and girl of 16 or older will be eligible for citizenship, is the latest scheme of William R. George, founder of the chain of George Junior Republics. Mr. George will begin his experiment by organizing such a municipal government in Ithaca, N. Y. He hopes that some day every city will have a junior government of its own. Mr. George's idea is to teach the boys and girls the responsibilities of citizenship. He is willing to stake his reputation on it. In outlining his plan he says:

"The more I studied young people the more I began to have ideas of my own, and I finally reached a point where I was convinced that a crime committed by a youth is due to that youth's lack of responsibility. The average boy between the ages of 16 and 21 going to high school has the physique of a man, and he knows a lot, often more than his parents. In addition to that, the average boy or girl has a keen idea of the various phases of political life. I believe the average youth in high school is as able to meet the responsibilities of citizenship as the average man, especially as the latter is inclined to grow indifferent as the years pass and leave the various questions of politics to those who make it a business. The youth under 21 feels little or no responsibility in regard to public issues.

"While I do not recommend changing the voting age to 16 years, I have something to substitute. I would have a junior municipality in every city in the land in which the boys and girls could become citizens, if they so desired, upon reaching the age of 16 years. In these days we learn almost every kind of trade or business by practical experience—everything except citizenship. I don't mean that the responsibility should be for bad boys and girls alone. I have found that all boys and girls are better off if they have some responsibility. I tried it at the Republic, and it worked."

Mr. George explained that his plan was to have the boys and girls elected to various offices coinciding with the positions held by the regularly elected officials. He expressed the opinion that the wise city official would welcome the coöperation of the junior officer. He said that it would be desirable to keep the juvenile government free from all factionalism, and to name the various parties so that the ideals rather than the party name would form the attraction.

"Would the regular government officials snub the boy government? No, because every year there would be a large number of boys passing from the age of 20 to the voting age of 21, and if they had previously been antagonized by any city official their voting strength would be something to be reckoned with and feared. I would have all citizens and officers keep an eye out for anything which was working an injury to the economic or social world, and I would have the citizens keep close watch of those under the age of 16, and look out for their moral welfare. It will give them a sense of responsibility, and it can go further in its effects than we have any idea of, and it will be all for the benefit of good government."

Mack Intends to Drop His Scouts.

Connie Mack, the schoolmaster of the diamond, has startled the baseball world with the announcement that the names of scouts will be erased from the pay roll of the Athletics. The tall tutor has come to the conclusion that the scouting system is an added expense and by no means the most practical way to bring young players into the major leagues.

The system Mack plans to introduce to replace his elaborate scouting follows the theories he has stood for in baseball matters since he began his career as a manager. He

will devote his attention to trying out schoolboys and sand-pile "phenoms" instead of paying fancy prices for minor-league stars recommended by scouts. Mack believes the scouting routine, from which little realization has been made, almost worthless in view of the fact that it costs the club $10,000 annually in salaries to scouts alone in addition to the sum paid for obtaining the youngsters' releases from the clubs of which they are the property.

Shibe Park will be a school for the cream of the talent in college ranks and leaders in the back-lot game the coming season. Assisting him in the work of bringing out new stars or athletes who may some day fill the shoes of present members of his well-balanced team Mack will have his first lieutenant, Captain Danny Murphy, and Harry Davis, and Ira Thomas.

"Scouts invariably do not size up a player the right way," said Connie. "They keep constantly in mind their reputation as pickers. If a boy shows speed, a good eye for the ball, and a strong arm, scouts wouldn't think of recommending him unless he has a reputation and has had considerable experience. A majority of players the scouts are willing to recommend are with minor-league reps."

One Hundred and Fifty for Yale Reforms.

More than 150 members of the academic sophomore class at Yale met recently and perfected their formal protest against the present senior society system at Yale. Many of the class leaders are prominent in the movement, and they say that if certain changes are not made they will decline elections.

The formal protest will be printed and distributed to all members of the class and to the alumni. The most important reforms called for are the elimination of the "excessive secrecy" of the societies, the abolishment of "tap day," and selection of members for merit only, rather than because of social prestige.

Dobbin Given Daily Joy Rides.

The Joplin Transfer Company, of Joplin, Mo., has found a novel way of using a truck and a team of horses in a sort of return combination. The firm bought a one-ton truck last summer, and fitted it with a furniture body. On long hauls the team and wagon are loaded and given a good start. Then the truck is loaded, and reaches the destination about the same time. After unloading both vehicles, the team is marched solemnly up into the body of the truck, the wagon is hitched behind, and the whole affair goes bowling merrily back again. The plan has been tried to points as distant as Pittsburgh, Kan., with great success. In fact, the horses like to ride so much that they frequently try to board the truck at the wrong time.

"Titanic" Waifs in Need.

With the formal filing of a claim for $30,000 against the White Star line for the loss of the husband of Mrs. Marcelle Navratli, who went down with the *Titanic*, it became known that "Lolo" and "Momo," the "*Titanic* waifs" cared for by Miss Margaret Hays, of New York, are now living in poverty with their mother at Nice, France.

F. K. Hays, father of the young woman, who brought the two children to New York, filed the claim for Mrs. Navratli. He said he had received word that the woman is working as a servant. Overlooked in the distribution of relief funds, she did not even receive the $30 found on her husband's body. Navratli fled from France with "Lolo" and "Momo" and sailed on the *Titanic*. A few minutes before the boat sank he handed the children to Miss Hays. The children could not tell their names, and it was weeks before the mother claimed them.

Double Bottom Saves Ship.

The Canadian Pacific steamship *Princess Sophia*, Captain Charles Campbell, struck a rock at Sentinel Island, Alaska, recently. A large hole was torn in the port side of the steamer's bow, but she was able to proceed on her way to Vancouver, B. C., under her own steam.

The steamer's double bottom kept her from sinking.

The accident to the *Princess Sophia* occurred at the place where her sister liner, the *Princess May*, was wrecked on August 5, 1910.

Author's Son Edits Prison Paper.

Julian Hawthorne, son of the famous novelist, who recently began serving a term in the United States prison, at Atlanta, Ga., for misuse of the mails, broke down and wept while the Glee Club of the University of Georgia was giving a performance for the convicts in the prison chapel. Hawthorne has already applied for the parole to which he is eligible. *Good Words*, the prison journal, appeared recently under the editorship of Hawthorne.

Kills Four Eagles With Pocket Knife.

Ray Beach sees no reason for being called a hero because he killed four big golden eagles with a pocket knife. "I had to do it or they'd have killed me," he says. The oldest trapper in the Bald Hills, South Dakota, remembers no such feat as this.

Beach's cheeks and hands bear scars that will always remind him of his battle with the birds. He was visiting his traps, set along Rapid Creek, when he caught sight of two eagles perched on a gnarled pine tree far up the cliff. He brought them both in rifle range, fired, and hit the two with one shot. One tumbled to the base of the cliff. He ran up and dispatched it with his knife. The other, only slightly wounded, fluttered about on a ledge just below the pine tree.

Beach wanted the second eagle. For the golden eagle, the war bird of the Sioux and the Cheyennes, is precious. He knew that for its smallest tail feather an Indian would give half a dollar, and the full price of a dead eagle on the reservation is a live horse.

To reach that ledge the trapper, leaving gun, game, and trap, made a detour of several miles, climbed the windy, snow-drifted mountainside, and crept down the face of the cliff till he reached the wounded eagle. It gave him a hard fight, but he finished it with a knife thrust in the breast. He tied it to his hunting belt and began his ascent to the top of the precipice.

Flat against the cliff in this perilous footing, with a sheer thousand feet of air below, suddenly he felt fanning pinions brush his back. He turned and saw two big eagles.

The eagles rushed toward Beach. In his dangerous plight he could not loose his hold to draw his knife, so he fell back on the rock ledge.

Then began a battle that lasted for more than an hour.

At last one, then the other, fluttered down the cliff and lay where it fell, and then Beach crawled to the top, and, weary and weak from loss of blood, made his way back.

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